

FOURTH EDITION.

A BOY DETECTIVE STORY BY THE AUTHOR OF "DEADWOOD DICK."



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"I'm Cool Kit, the King of Kids, of Philadelphia, Pa., and
don't you forget it!"

CHAPTER I.

A NEWSBOY'S NOTION.

"ERE'S yer papers—*Call*, *News*, *Star*, and *Item*—all 'bout the shockin' suicide. 'Ere's yer *Item*—one cent!"

Such was the cry of a young urchin, who, with a bundle of papers under his arm, was wending his way along Chestnut street, Philadelphia's crowded thoroughfare, one sunny August afternoon.

"'Ere's yer papers—all about the shockin' suicide!"

He was not the only one whose voice awoke the echoes of that particular afternoon, crying out for the sale of the press, for there were scores of youthful venders of news, darting hither and thither, and endeavoring to work up business from the sale of their favorite sheets, to the swarm of pedestrians that ever make Chestnut street a gay and attractive promenade.

The newsboy to whom we invite the reader's attention, was a typical representative of his peculiar craft—a veritable street Arab, with nothing to distinguish him from a dozen others of his calling, unless it was his independent bearing, and his sharp, intelligent brown eyes.

His face was just an ordinary boyish one, rather sharp of features; his mouth was rather large, and his hair brown, and unkempt. His figure, however, was well developed, for his age, which was about sixteen.

His garments had seen long and rough service; but, rough though he appeared, he had no difficulty in disposing of his papers, and his bundle was reduced, to but half a dozen copies, when he had reached the vicinity of the State House, where, in answer to his call, a stranger intercepted him, a tall, well-built individual, with a full brown beard, a man about five and forty years of age, well dressed, and rather aristocratic appearing.

To the newsboy, he put this query:

"Well, my lad. Who has committed suicide?"

Cool Kit, for that was the name by which the lad was known, along Chestnut street, regarded his interrogator keenly.

"Suicide?" he echoed. "Haven't had time to look, been so b'ilin' over full o' bizness. 'Spect ef ye invest a cent inter an Item or News ye kin git onto the particulars."

Which answer did not appear to strike the stranger's fancy, for, with a grunt of displeasure, he walked rapidly away.

At which Kit gave vent to a whistle of surprise.

"Well, I should smile!" he commented. "I wonder what's bitin' him? He appeared sorter anxious to know who had committed suicide, but he warn't willin' to spend a cent to know. By Jingol it rather hits me as sort o' crooked, like."

Watching the stranger, he saw that he kept straight down Chestnut street, toward the Delaware river.

"Rockon I'll investigate who this party is, who has gone and settled hisself. 'Tain't often I go yellin' off papers without knowin' jist what is in 'em."

Examination of one of his papers resulted in his finding an account of the particular suicide, which, by large head-lines, was made a feature of that afternoon's news attraction.

"Hillo! Why 'tain't a he who has kerflum-mixed, this time. La'mme see: 'Suockin' Suicide. A Beautiful Girl Found Dead. A Supposed Case of Self-Murder. Her Identity Unknown!"

"Well! Dash me if there ain't somethin' sort o' 'funny about this, after all," he commented. "Let's see what she croaked about."

So he read as follows:

"A singular case of suicide has just been reported from the — Ward, full details of which have not as yet been received at this office. From what is known, however, it appears that a beautiful girl committed suicide by stabbing herself, this morning, somewhere between the hours of nine and ten o'clock, her body being yet warm when discovered by Officer —, at a few minutes after ten."

"The scene of the tragedy was a vacant lot, at the corner of P— and L— streets, which is not fenced in, and is principally occupied for the storage of carts belonging to the teamsters of the neighborhood. The locality is rather isolated, there being but one row of houses within a block of the scene of the suicide, and they not commanding a ready view of the spot."

"No one in the neighborhood admits having seen the girl prior to the finding of her corpse, and as there has been no weapon found, nor any clew discovered about her person leading to her identification, the case is surrounded with mystery."

"She is described as about seventeen years of age, fairly well dressed, and very pretty. There are two knife-wounds, one through and the other close to her heart."

Such was the sensation of that afternoon's paper, and Cool Kit gave the article a careful perusal.

He was not an illiterate boy, by any means, although he had attended school but a few weeks in his sixth year. He could read, write and spell, however, better than any newsboy on the street, was clever at arithmetic, and was a shrewd lad in more ways than one. So quick of perception was he—so ready-witted and wide awake—that he was known among the force as "Cool Kit" and the "King Kid."

His name, so far as he knew, was Christopher Cool; hence the first-mentioned nickname.

And now, standing there just after reading the item mentioned, it occurred to Cool Kit that the stranger who wouldn't invest a cent really had some knowledge of the affair.

Why he associated the man with the affair he could not say—it was only an impression—but so fixed did it finally become in his mind that the Kid resolved to gratify his curiosity by seeing the suicide and learning all that he could about her.

Being nothing but a street Arab, it did not

seem an easy matter to obtain the desired view of the remains, but he was determined, nevertheless, to try.

Among other officers along the Chestnut street beat, he knew a big-hearted, ponderous Irishman, by the name of Pat Pilgrim, who was very popular with the force, and the chief. He admired Kit because the lad always seemed glad to meet him and was a lad of spirit—which a good policeman always likes.

So that evening he hunted up the Pilgrim, as he called him, who loomed up, a grim emblem of official watchfulness, at his "reserve" corner.

He greeted Kit with a smile.

"Arrah, laddy buck! Phat for luck have ye bin havin' the day?"

"Luck!" echoed Kit. "Why, Pat, I've sold out, hours ago, and retired from bizness, to live on the interest of my appetite. But, ter sail right inter the harbor of bizness, Patsy—have ye heard of the susanside of the girl that shuffled off from a dirt-cart lot?"

"Indade I have, me boy. Phat of it? Phy is ye axin' 'bout the gal? Shure an' isn't it nigh ivery mornin' that some one is found dead, an' kilt, or suicided?"

"Guess ye'r right. But this case is no suicide, or my name is Cupid. I want'er git an inter-dooce to the stiff, I do, an' I want ye to give me a nod tew ther proper authorities."

"Git out! Phy go to tha corner, an' tell him what yez want, an' that Pat Pilgrim sint yez. Then yez'll be all right."

"But how'll I find the coroner?"

"Divil a bit do I know. Go down to the Central, an' ax for a bar'l av money, an' they wull give it to yez, if yez only tell 'em Patsy Pilgrim sent yez."

"Oh! I'll bet they will! Anyhow, I'll go and investigate," Kit declared, and hurried away.

He had no difficulty in finding the coroner's office, but the coroner was not in, nor was anyone else.

Not discouraged, the Kid next sought the residence of Simon Yale, whom he knew to be a young detective, struggling hard to make a rise in the world, and thus keep the wolf from the door.

He found the man at home, and was received with a courtesy, which showed that Simon was a born and bred gentleman.

"I reckon mebbe ye know me!" Kit remarked, by way of introducing himself. "I'm Cool Kit, boot black, newsboy, and King of Kids."

"It strikes me I have seen you before, my lad. What can I do for you?"

"Well, thet depends. S'pose you're in the perfesh, yit?"

"Well, yes, after a fashion," Yale replied, with a smile. "I'm not overrun with bizness, however. Have you a job you want me to undertake?"

"Well, yes—leastwise, I have a job I want'er undertake, myself, and want yer ter help me. Now, suppose a cadaver were found w'ot no one knew, or claimed—they'd morgueage it wouldn't they?"

"It would be held at the Morgue, a certain length of time, yes."

"Well, mebbe you read about the suicide w'ot's in to-day's papers."

"Certainly. Rather an odd case, I take it?"

"You bet. Now, then, I want to find thet girl and see her corpse, at once."

"What for?"

"Because, I do, that's all. You're a detective, an' you can take me down to the morgue, and git me an inter-dooce."

"Very well, I will willingly do so if it will be of any benefit to you. But, I don't think it will, as nothing to prove her identity has been discovered, that I am aware of, as yet. The girl will be interred in the Potter's Field, among the unknown."

"Jest hold up yer coupeigh, a minnit, ef yer please!" the boy returned; "no Potter's Field for her jist yet. How do yer know but et's a lost sister o' mine, or some one else's, hey? Now, I ain't goin' ter tell ye all I know, or don't know, but don't mind admittin' thet I think I hev struck a snap; so hard a-port, an' let's sail fer ther morgue."

Yale looked at his watch.

"Well, I will accommodate you," he finally said, "although, unless you have positive knowledge about this case it will be time and trouble for nothing, I am sure."

"Ye think I ain't smart, hey?"

"Well, not that, but your youth and inexperience will work dead against you, if you propose to go into this case as a detective."

"Can't help that. Inexper'nce never clumb

over this chicken yet, you bet yer bottom trade dollar. Tain't the biggest or fattest chap w'ot gits inter Congress, an' ef I don't occupy a perforated mayor's chair one o' these days, why ye can shute me fer a red-headed mud-bien from ther swamps of Jersey."

"All right. True grit is half the battle, and I hope you will succeed. We will see what luck we have in getting into the morgue."

He was soon in readiness, and they set out.

Cool Kit's cheeks and eyes glowed with anticipation; he was taking his first steps in a new career, for, in fact, he had often and often dreamed of dropping his calling of newsboy to become a detective, and now that he was actually embarked in his first case he seemed inspired with a new life. If he should succeed in unearthing the secret of that beautiful girl's death a bright career was opened to him.

And he resolved not to fail!

CHAPTER II.

COOL KIT MAKES A RESCUE AND A DISCOVERY.

ARRIVING at the Morgue, after a long tramp, Detective Yale experienced no trouble in gaining admission for himself and his young pard.

There chanced to be but three bodies "on shutter" at the time of their arrival, one of which was that of the beautiful suicide.

The attendant accompanied the two visitors and uncovered the remains to the shoulders, upon which the weird lights of the dead-house shone with ghastly effect.

Both Yale and Cool Kit gave a little gasp of surprise, as they gazed upon the upturned features of the dead girl.

She was well-formed, probably but a few months over seventeen. Her face, even in its deathly repose, was one of rare beauty. Her features were of a refined cast, and her wealth of disheveled hair, was like in color to golden sunshine.

The region of the wounds, which had caused her death, was covered with an oil blanket, which the attendant did not remove.

"Has any one identified the corpse yet?" Detective Yale asked.

"No one knows anything about her."

"What was the report of the inquest?"

"Deceased came to her death from the effects of two knife-thrusts administered by her own hand."

"Was there a post-mortem examination?"

"There was."

"What sort of a knife was used in inflicting the wound?"

"A thin dirk, or some instrument of a like pattern."

Yale turned to Cool Kit then.

"Well, my friend, do you recognize the young lady?" he asked.

"I reckon not, boss; I'm nigh about sure I never saw her before. Still, thet ain't sayin' I can't find out who she was. One thing's purty sure—she didn't commit no suicide; 'tain't in sech girls to commit suicide like that."

"It is hard to tell what a woman will not do when crossed in love or attacked by misfortune," the attendant logically remarked, recovering the now marble-like body—a signal for the visitors to depart—which they did at once.

Little was said on their return. At Market street Kit announced his intention of going in another direction.

"Well, then, good-night!" Yale said cheerily.

"I suppose I shall run across you selling papers to-morrow?"

"Nary a paper for Christofer!" was the reply.

"Henceforth, I'm Cool Kit, the Detective an' the King o' Kids, you bet! So look out fer developments, fer ef ther morgue won't give up ther dead girl's secret, the world will sooner or later, an' I'll hev a grip on the world, close at hand. So long! I'll hire ye soon as the biz needs two heads tew the bar'l," and Kit strode away with an air of importance, that brought a broad smile to Yale's face.

"The boy's got it in him to succeed at something, but I reckon he won't make a meal out of that case."

After leaving the detective, Kit roamed up and down the streets aimlessly, for his mind was busied in cogitating over his new case.

To solicit advice from regular members of the detective craft could do him little good, as where one might "nurke" his case for the sake of realizing benefit from it, ten others would tell him he was a fool or a lunatic, which was an all-sufficient reason why he should go it alone—at least for the present.

It was eleven o'clock when he boarded a Ridge avenue car, en route for his lodgings, which were not far from the car depot of that line. He made his home with a poor but kind

widow woman and her daughter, both of whom were forced to work in woolen-mills for their living.

It was partly to help them along that Kit accepted of their frugal accommodations, and partly because he cherished a boyish liking for the daughter, plump and pretty little Dorrit Darling, whom he counted about the sweetest sprite of a girl between the Delaware and Manayunk.

The car contained only two other passengers when Kit got aboard, one of whom was the conductor, a sour-looking individual, and the other a rough-dressed, rowdyish-looking man, who, judging by his dirt-begrimed face, was a mechanic, belonging to some of the down-town manufactories.

His appearance went to show, too, that he had been imbibing more "rats" than were consistent with sobriety.

Hardly had the Kid taken a seat, when the fellow staggered to his feet and plumped himself down beside the boy.

"I say, young feller, give's a chaw off o' yer plug, will ye?" he cried, blowing his unsavory breath full in Kit's face.

"I haven't any—I don't chew!" Kit replied, disgusted with the man.

"Ye don't chew, hey? You rat, ye aire lyin' ter me!"

"No, I'm not lyin' to ye!" Kit retorted, coolly eying the rough. "Ain't once enough to tell you?"

"No et ain't! I'm Mike McGill, an' yer bet I'm a sundowner. A feller w'ot sasses me, most allers gits a thump in the jaw!" and he glared at the Kid, ferociously.

"I guess you won't kill any dead people," the boy returned, his cheeks blushing with anger. "You mind your business, and I'll mind mine!"

The rough was upon his feet in an instant.

"See heer, ye little son-of-a-gun, you've gotter get out ov this or I'll fetch ye out!" he roared.

"Go and set down!" Kit cried, at the same time giving the fellow a push that landed him upon the opposite seat, while he sprang to his feet, himself. "Now, you drunken snoozer, if you don't behave yourself, or the conductor don't put you off the car, I'll do some of the thumpin' you've talked about."

"Let up on this fightin'," you young ruffian! cried the conductor, blustering into the car. "None of it, or out ye goes!"

"What, you take this big loafer's part? You'd better git back onto your platform, Mister Macdoodle!" Cool Kit cried, his eyes blazing with anger. "I don't let no snoozer impose on me ef I am a light weight, and I can lick a round dozen like you, you Emerald of the Isle!"

Evidently the knight of the bell-punch believed it, for he beat a retreat, with a growl.

So Kit sat down, still on his guard, however, lest the bully should come lunging at him.

The car had crossed Girard avenue, by a dozen or more blocks, and was well up in the northwestern part of the city, when it stopped, and a passenger got on.

She was a trim built, neatly attired girl, of about Cool Kit's age, and was quite pretty of countenance, at once reminding the young detective of the dead girl at the morgue, for her hair, her complexion, the shape of her features, all were singularly like those of the unknown supposed suicide.

There were traces of tears and a certain redness about her eyes, together with a worried expression, which indicated that she had been weeping, recently.

She first gave a half-scared look, at the conductor, on taking her seat; then her gaze wandered to the face of Mike McGill, and then to the countenance of the King of Kids.

The face of both the conductor and McGill, seemed to give her a chill of horror, but she appeared to be reassured, when she gave Kit a searching look.

After giving her an opportunity to inventory his appearance he did not hesitate to return the compliment, and the longer he gazed at her, the deeper became his conviction that she must in some way be related to the dead beauty at the Morgue.

After a wait of a couple of minutes, the uncivil-looking conductor re-entered the car, and paused before the fair passenger.

Kit noticed that a sudden pallor flitted over her face as she searched in the velvet portemonnaie she carried, for her fare, then she fished out a coin, and handed it to the conductor.

"There is five cents, sir—it is all I have. I thought I had more but have not. Will that

not take me a few squares? I want to find my sister!" she said, in a plaintive voice.

Ha! her sister!

Cool Kit's heart nearly jumped into his throat. Could it be true? Was she indeed the sister of the dead girl?

"Five cents ain't enuff to help ye find your sister!" the conductor snarled. "Ye can't work that racket on this car," and he at once pulled the bell.

"Oh! but, sir, let me explain. I am a stranger, sir—"

"Dry up! Get out, or by me soul I'll put ye off!"

Cool Kit was upon his feet in an instant, and pushed the conductor fiercely backward just as the cowardly wretch would have laid hands upon the terrified passenger.

"Stand back, you loafer!" the King of Kids cried, fiercely. "I will pay this young lady's fare—then, we'll get off and get another car, which, mebbe, a gentleman will run!"

The conductor took the fare which Kit handed him and then stopped the car. Kit and his young charge got off, she making no hesitation to following his lead.

When they were upon the curb, and the car had passed on, the poor girl burst into tears.

"Oh! you are so good and kind, and I can never thank you enough for what you have done. Oh! dear, what shall I do? I am lost, and do not know where I am, or what I am going to do!"

"It struck me thet way, when I first sot eyes on ye!" Kit agreed, "and I made up my mind to stand by ye, an' see you through, like I alius do a boy when he's gittin' soaked—that is, unless he deserves it. I'll fix that conductor, to-morrow, tho'. But, what's your name, an' where d'ye wanter go?"

"My name is Lily Rogers, but I do not really know where I am, or where I want to go. I am lost, and am hunting for my sister, Cassie, who left me last night."

Kit reflected a moment. It certainly would not be prudent to reveal to her his suspicions, or to suddenly shock her by declaring his belief that her sister was dead.

He must take time to mature his plans, and find out all he could, in the mean time.

So, seeing another car approaching, he said:

"Well, ye can bet I'm sorry fer ye. But, thet don't do much good. It's gettin' too late fer searchin' to-night, an' so if you'll come along home w' me, an' let the old lady an' Dorrit care for ye, to-night, I'll give you my word we'll scare up your sister to-morrow. I ain't a newsboy an' bootblack fer nothin', an' ef I do say it, I know more about old Phila, in a minnit, than half the perlice ever finds out, ef they lives ter git as gray as a freckled centarian hen. So, here's the car, an' we'll soon git hum, where you'll be treated like a foreign actress in America."

"Oh! you are so kind. How shall I ever be able to repay you?"

"Jest by sendin' me a telephone dispatch, when any snoozer treats you mean, so that I can lick blazes out o' him. But, here we are; this is Big Jimmy's cair, an' ye can bet he's a gentleman."

They boarded the car, and obtained seats, but Kit made no attempt to question his fair companion, until they had arrived as close to their destination as the cars would take them.

Then, they left the car, and the girl took his arm.

"We've got a bit to walk, yet," Kit said, "but it won't take long. You do not belong in Philadelphia, eh?"

"Oh! no, although we were born, and lived here, until six or seven years of age. Then, mother and father parted, and father went West and took us two children, and left mother and an elder son, here."

"Ah! How old would your brother be, if now living?"

"Let me see—twenty five years of age I believe."

"What did yer mother an' father split up, fer?"

"I understand it was on account of property. They were very poor, hard-working people, until just before the separation, when my mother fell heir to a fortune of ten thousand dollars in cash. Papa wanted some of it to invest in business, so that he would not have to work so hard, in his old age, but mother refused to let him have a penny, and as the result a separation was arranged, and papa took sister and I, and went to California."

"Well?"

"Papa was not prosperous for a number of years, in California, although he managed to

eke out a livelihood, and after awhile, he went to Idaho, where, as they say, out West, he "struck it rich."

"Did he hear from his wife an' son?"

"Not until two months ago, when a man came to the town where we were living—Bed Rock—and fetched the news that he had been sent by mother, in search of us, and had, by good fortune, experienced no trouble in finding us, father being pretty well known, among prominent capitalists. The story he brought was to the effect that mother was dying of consumption, and being repentant and poverty-stricken, through my brother's squandering all of her money, wanted to see us all, before she died."

"Ah! Go on."

"Father being a stern man, refused to come East, but sent us, in his stead. The messenger was to remain West, but stated that mother's attorney, would surely meet us on our arrival in Philadelphia, giving us his address and also a photograph of him. On our arrival at the Pennsylvania depot, sure enough, the gentleman did meet us, only to find me suffering from a severe sick headache. He took us to the Girard House, and registered me, suggesting that I rest at the hotel while he conducted Cassie to her mother's house, returning for me, after I should have sought a couple of hours' rest. I was only too glad to accept the proposition, as I was scarcely able to stand up. Since then, I have not been able to find or see either that man, or my sister. I shudder to imagine, what may have happened!"

CHAPTER III.

BOY-AND-GIRL LOVE.

By this time they had arrived at the little two story cottage, where the widow Darling resided, so it gave Cool Kit no chance to comment upon the revelation his pretty *protégée* had thus far made. They entered a plainly-furnished but cosy little sitting-room, and here the Kid introduced Miss Rogers to Mrs. Darling and Dorrit, who welcomed her as Kit's friend; and after Kit had made a brief narration of what he himself had learned, Lily was surprised to find that the Darlings could not do too much toward making her feel at home.

All of which pleased the young detective hugely.

The widow set out a tempting lunch, and after it was over, Lily expressed a desire to retire, as she was feeling very much fatigued.

She was shown to the best room, and not long after, the widow sought her bed, which left Kit and Dorrit alone.

Although "only a mill-girl"—and how lightly the term is applied to many a noble-hearted, conscientious toiler among the fair sex—Dorrit was well-bred, pretty of face and figure, and at once refined, modest and charming, both in speech and demeanor.

The Darlings had come over from England. Dorrit's father was a lineal descendant of a good family. Misfortunes, however, had beset him, and he had died, leaving his wife and child in destitute circumstances.

For several years Cool Kit had been an inmate of the Darling home, and he and Dorrit had become such fast friends that, childlike, they had come to rather regard the one as made for the other, and to get a trifle jealous if their attentions were not paid strictly to each other.

Hence it was, now, that he found himself alone with her, that Kit was really not unprepared to get a straight out-and-out curtain-lecture for his temerity in daring to bring to the Darling cottage a girl as pretty as his little sweetheart.

"Well, sweetness, how have you been to-day?" he queried, when the widow had vacated the sitting-room.

"Oh! as well as usual, although I am tired and discouraged."

"Tired and discouraged, eh? And why discouraged?"

"Oh! because the branch of work I am employed at is overdone, and the company propose to close that department indefinitely. So I was notified that my services would not be required any more, at present. And you, Kit, are the cause of it."

Kit looked astonished.

"I the cause of it?" he echoed. "Well, now, jest eat me up fer a dozen o' fried, ef I see how I can be the cause of it!"

"Well, you are, anyhow," with a pout.

"But how? Don't send a feller up fer a month or six weeks without lettin' him know just what's the matter."

"Well, you see, you used to—oh! you know,

you've escorted me as far as the mills, several times."

"And what of that?"

"What did you do, right in front of the office?"

"Why, I kissed you, and you didn't object about it, at all."

"All the same it caused my discharge. The proprietor's son has been rather sweet on me, you see, and without any encouragement on my part, has apparently grown to believe that I cared for him. Therefore when he saw you kiss me, this morning, and made mention of the fact to me, I must naturally suppose that it was through his instigation I got my discharge."

"Oh! p'raps you're right. If so, I am very sorry that I kissed you, an' I'll leave the job alone, after this. If his lips aire better than mine, why ye'r' welcome to 'em. I think I will retire. *Au revoir!*"

And with the best feigned nonchalance, Cool Kit arose, and took a step toward the stairway.

Dorrit was beside him, in a moment, however, and prevented his departure.

"Don't go, Kit!" she pleaded. "You have no right to put any misconception on what I have said. If you take it that way it is I who have a right to be offended," and she looked as if about to cry.

"Dorrit, I know what you mean; but you needn't get jealous. You see, this girl is in trouble, and I'm goin' to see her through if it takes a leg, or two of 'em!"

"That's all right, Kit; I admire you so much the more, for your noble spirit. But—but—seeing that you have referred to her, you know how—how bad I would feel if you were to fall in love with her, and forget all about poor me. Promise me this—that you won't fall in love with her, but will remain true and faithful to me. Please promise me, Kit, and I will be content, for what you promise that I know you will do."

She clung to him so that, in spite of himself, tears sprung into his eyes, and seating himself, he drew her to his knee.

"Little Dorrit," he said, "your words tech me in a soft spot. They say a gal's sense matures suddiner than a boy's, an' ef that's ther case, you orter not make me give myself away with a mere promise. We're both too young ter think o' gettin' married fer a long time yet; but ef you'll wait fer me I'll wait fer you. Does that suit, sweetheart?"

"No, it doesn't. If I have to wait forever, I'll find some one else."

"All right, sweetheart; do so. That will give me a chance ter scrape a fortune tergether, git run fer mayor or gub'nor, an' then, ef some prettier feller than I hasn't been along ter gobble on ter ye, why, I'll take you, pervidin' you will be mine, then."

"I won't! I wouldn't have you, after such treatment."

"There, now, don't git foxy. Remember all who travel with me will wear diamonds."

"I wouldn't have you then, Kit Cool, if you were ballasted down with diamonds weighing a pound apiece. So go to bed," and she tried to break away from his detaining grasp.

"All right, Miss Pouts! But you'll be sorry for my discharge when you are sober," Kit laughed, snatching a kiss, and then hurrying from the room.

While Dorrit naturally found herself in a very unpleasant frame of mind.

So much for boy and girl love!

CHAPTER IV.

DRAWING IT DOWN FINE.

WHEN Cool Kit arose the next morning, it was with a brain full of ideas, as to the future. Going down-stairs, he found that Lily was already up, and assisting Dorrit at getting breakfast.

There were traces on the faces of both which indicated that neither had slept much, but both welcomed the Kid with a pleasant smile and glad greeting.

After breakfast Kit and his *proteges* had another chat.

"I have been thinking over yer case, Miss Rogers," the boy said, "an' I don't opine it will take me long ter figger it out, by yer givin' me a few more p'inters. What sort of a lookin' man was it who met you at the depot?"

"He was rather a good-looking, pleasant-appearing person, who would not naturally impress one that he was bad. By the way, however, I have one of the photo's brought West, by Mr. Schofield. Here it is."

She produced a card photograph, and gave it to Kit, who needed but one glance at it to tell

him it was the very person who had accosted him on Chestnut street, and so aroused his curiosity. Kit had noted every feature of that man's face well, and the photographed face was identical with it.

Lily was watching him anxiously.

"You have seen that person before?" she asked, evidently judging that he had.

"I have," he replied, "and, Miss Rogers, I set that aire feller down fer a shark, you bet! Tae'r ain't no more Blackstun about him than thar is about my blackin'-box. Now, see heer, don't yer git scart, but be brave. Ef ye don't, I won't help ye a bit. Ef you'll promise to be a man—that is, brave as a man—an' give me full charge of the case, I'll stand by you through thick an' thin, till we sift ther hull bizness to ther bottom. Will you promise?"

"Oh! yes, willingly. Young though you are, I believe you are brave and honest, and I have the greatest of reliance in you."

"Thank you! I'll prove to you thet I'm what they call me—King of Kids!"

"You are so kind and good—I do not know what I should do but for you," and with tearful eyes, and girlish impetuosity, she threw her arms about his neck and kissed him.

Luckily, Dorrit was not in the room, for which Kit was very thankful!

"Be calm now," he said, "and brave as a menagery tiger. Thar's nothin' like grit and backbone, and I allow that I've got enuff of that for the two of us. Now, let me see: This professed lawyer's name?"

"Samuel Sands."

"Sands—Sands? There is a lawyer of that name; but, 'tain't this snoozer."

"Oh! sir, do not keep me in suspense. Do you think my sister has met with foul play? Do not deceive me, for I believe you know something about her, and I am prepared now to hear the worst."

Kit took a searching glance, and felt positive that she had not overrated her strength; so he answered:

"I am afraid something has gone wrong, Miss Rogers, but I cannot unnecessarily alarm you while there is a hope ter hang on ter. Tell me—d'ye remember *where* the lawyer said your mother lived?"

"I believe he mentioned something about P— or L— streets, but I am not positive."

"You are right. Now, another thing. You got on the cars with but little money. Did your sister have much?"

"Oh! yes; she being the elder, she carried the money. That is what makes me fear that she has met with foul play. I had a couple of dollars in change, but spent it in a vain attempt to reach P— and L— street, for every one seemed to misdirect me."

"How much money did your sister carry with her?"

"She had near twenty-three hundred dollars. Two thousand of that was to go to our mother, toward her doctor's bills and funeral expenses in case of her death."

"You put up at the Girard House?"

"The man said it was the Girard. I am sure I don't know, being a stranger."

"Did you register your own name?"

"No, sir; I was talking with sister while he wrote it for me."

"What room did ye have?"

"Number 5. It was up one flight of stairs."

"Do you think you would know the place again if you was to see it?"

"I hardly think so; yet I might."

"Do you know what fer lookin' front it had?"

"Red brick—the same as most all the build-ings."

"Then ye weren't at the Girard, that's certain, an' et would most likely take a Dutch Italyun search-warrant ter find out *where* ye was. What about your baggage?"

"We only brought large satchels, which he took outside, stating that he would send them to mother's. This was at the depot."

Kit remained silent, scratching away at his head in an amusing manner.

"Well, Miss Rogers, I tell you just what I know about matters. The chances are *very* big thet this aire a snortin' detective case thet I hev got hold of—leastwise thet's the way it looks like to me. As you reckoned, there's every reason ter believe thet yer sister has been foully dealt with."

"Oh! dear! oh! dear—can it be true? Oh! only tell me that it is not so!" and Lily buried her face in her hands.

"There, now, remember what ye promised. If it turns out that your sister is dead, there's only one thing to do!"

"What is that?"

"Why, take ther trail of vengeance, and sift the case to the bottom, and hunt your sister's murderer down to death. That's me, an' I'm Cool Kit, King of Kids, frum Poulamydelphia, Pa!"

In a ringing tone the young detective uttered the words, as he sprung erect, and held one hand tragically aloft, while Lily, kneeling at his feet, gazed piteously up into his boyish, manly face.

"And you will—"

"I will stand by you, little lady, till the wrong has been righted; through fire and water, we will go, if necessary, till justice has bin did!"

"Thank God! Bless you, Kit!" and at the words, faintly uttered, she sunk back upon the floor, in a dead swoon.

Realizing only too keenly, from Kit's words and manner that her sister was indeed dead, she had borne up under the heavy blow, until no longer able to endure the agony that overwhelmed her.

CHAPTER V.

MCKELVEY'S VERDICT.

LIFTING the senseless girl to a lounge, Kit summoned Dorrit, and briefly related what had happened. Restoratives were applied, but when Lily once more opened her eyes, her speech was wild and incoherent, and it became obvious that her mind was wandering.

A doctor who resided in the neighborhood was immediately called, and at once announced that the girl was in great danger from brain fever.

"You can help her, can't you?" Kit anxiously inquired, for never having had a day's sickness in his life, he had no idea of what the doctor's words implied.

"Oh! yes, I can bring her through all right, without doubt, but if brain fever really sets in, the case will take weeks of time."

"She has had a shock caused by her sister's death, an' bein' out o' funds an' friends, I took her in, an' will put up fer the doctor's bill, 'cause she aire good an' square."

"You will?" the physician demanded, regarding Kit with some surprise.

"Yes, I will!" promptly. "I ain't nothin' but a bootblack an' newsboy, but I've got nigh eighty dollars saved up, ef I don't wear broadcloth; an' when the young leddy suffers for medicine or grub, we won't know anything about et—heigh, Dorrit?"

"I will do what I can for her, I am sure," Dorrit replied, earnestly.

"Well, my dear boy, you have a big heart, I see, and the best of my skill and medical attendance shall not cost you a cent. A boy of your principles deserves encouragement, and, as for Miss Dorrit, I see clearly that she will make a capital nurse. So now, we will try and get the patient upon her feet again, within a few days as is consistent with her future good health."

And after administering remedies, the kind physician took his departure, promising to return as often as his professional services would be necessary.

"Oh, you bet thet feller's a hyacinth!" Kit admiringly declared, after the doctor's departure. "I'll go my last red spot on him, every time. And now, Dotty, if you care anything for the Kid, you take good care of our patient, while I skip fer town. I tell ye, I've got sum scrumptious detective work to do, what'll make me want a dry shirt on every two days; but I'm goin' thr'u' with it, ef it takes a leg. If the rogues foller me, they'll all wear diamonds—pinned to their minds!"

"But, Kit, what if—"

"Tut, tut, now; she won't die, while I'm gone. You do just what the doc says, and she'll be all right."

And as Dorrit, whose tender little heart yearned and throbbed for Kit, promised to do her best to nurse the patient, the young sleuth took his departure.

"Golly! my cranium will bu'st, ef I don't get shut o' some o' these ideas what I've got ter foller up!" he muttered, as he rode away into town. "I've got more ideas condensed inter this 'ere skull, than thar's lager in a bar'l, ter say nothin' erbout ther unsteady legs, and so forth. Now then, let me set my dynamo inter motion."

After some deliberation, he resolved to visit Detective Yale again, and have him accompany him on a second visit to the morgue.

Just what he would do in the way of action after such a visit, he did not really know, but it occurred to him that another view of the dead

girl might be the means of suggesting something new to him.

He found Yale at home, who, after some coaxing, consented to again accompany the boy to the dead-house.

The trip was made without incident, but on their arrival at the rooms a surprise was awaiting them.

"The body has been identified, and removed by relatives," was the answer to their inquiry.

"Removed?" Kitechoed. "When? By whom? Where?"

"Dunno nothin' about it!" the keeper replied, crustily. "I received my orders to surrender it, an' I did so."

"You surely must know who you surrendered it to?" Yale spoke up.

"Well, what of it, if I do? I've no business to tell ye. Go to the coroner. Who are you, anyhow?"

"That will inform you *who* I am," Yale retorted, exhibiting his badge, "and I might add, that by a coming change of City Government, a more courteous Morgue official could be secured."

"Indeed! Well, I run this Morgue, and I'll be courteous to who I like. So you can get out!"

As there appeared to be nothing else to do, the two friends took their departure.

"The only thing now is to visit the coroner," Yale decided, "and there is no need even of that if the dead girl's friends have removed her."

"They hain't removed—her friends hain't!" Kit declared, emphatically. "Yale, a murder, and a robbery has been done, an' one o' ther biggest pieces o' rascality is afoot that ever you hear tell of—you just believe me, for I'm dead onto the trail. I can't give ye any more of it now, but ef ye want'er foller me, you'll wear diamonds, one o' these days."

"I believe you're crazy, boy!"

"All right. Skip out, now, or I might murder ye, wi' a cleaver!"

"Well, I'll not skip. I've nothing else to do, and I'll stick by you!"

"Then, tew ther coroner's, we go. Ye kin do ther talkin', some o' the time, anyhow."

And to the coroner's they did go.

Yale had met the official before, and was recognized by him.

"Well, sir, what can I do for you?" was the gentleman's query.

"We came to investigate, sir, in regard to the disposition of yesterday's case of suicide," Yale replied.

"Ah! yes. No investigation is required. The remains were turned over to the relatives, this morning."

"But, we have reason to believe, that an investigation is needed. Who were the parties who claimed to identify the girl?"

"William and Sarah Walker, of 68 State street, Chicago. The girl was the gentleman's sister, who had been missing, some days, while temporarily deranged. Believing her to be en route for the East, they gave chase, and arrived in Philadelphia, only to learn of the suicide, and to identify the remains."

"Indeed! Can you give me a description of the parties?"

"Yes. The man was about twenty-nine or thirty, and resembled the dead girl. He was well dressed. The woman was younger, and a brunette."

"Did you order a release of the remains, without investigating whether these people were from State street, Chicago?"

"It is our custom to do so when there is reasonable evidence that the parties are what they represent."

The coroner, like all officers, evidently did not feel like being questioned too closely, a fact which Kit noticed, and gave Yale a nudge to "come off."

"One more question," Yale persisted: "Who removed the body from the 'the rink,' to prepare it for burial—what undertaker I mean?"

"McKelvey, I believe."

"He obtained a permit, I suppose, for the removal of the body, from the city?"

"Without doubt."

With a bow, Yale thanked him, and, accompanied by Cool Kit, left the office.

"By the howlin' mud-hens!" Kit remarked when they reached the street, "that feller didn't keer a continental whether he worked his lips, or not, did he?"

"Of course not; he isn't paid to talk. What next?"

"Oh! we've got to foller the trail."

"Clear to Chicago?"

"Yes, ef necessary, but it isn't, I don't think—

not yet, at least. D'ye know where McKelvey, ther stiff stowaway, bangs out!"

"I don't know his address."

"Well, we'll tackle a drug store fer a Directory, then."

The Directory was found, and also the undertaker's address—by which time it was well along toward noon.

"Ef we hurry up we may get on track of the body, yet!" Kit said eagerly.

"Now, see here!" Yale protested, decidedly, "I want to understand more than I do. Suppose you find the body—how is that to benefit you? I tell you, you've got to let me into the whole business, if we are to work together. Make a clean breast of what you know and I pledge my honor that your confidence will not be misplaced, but that I will see you through to the end of the game."

"Kit did not reply at once. He cogitated awhile then answered: 'I'll open the sardine-box an' let ye examin' an' pass yer opinion, as we ride along in the cars.'"

Accordingly, when they were aboard the street car, the Kid gave the elder detective a detailed account of the case, the same, substantially as it has been given to the reader.

Yale's face manifested continued surprise as he listened.

"Well, I'm blamed if you haven't struck a peculiar case," he declared, and one that must have careful handling. Our first move is plain. We must find the body, and thus possibly also get hold of the very man we want. There's a deep game being played, and we will work like beavers to ferret it out, even if we don't get a cent, for our trouble. It would materially aid us, if the girl Lily was able to go with us!"

In due time they arrived at the undertaking establishment of Michael McKelvey, but found Mike out.

In answer to an inquiry as to his whereabouts, the good Mrs. McK. made answer:

"Shore, if it's Moike yez want, tha devil's own lusher, ye'll find him over yohnder, for-ninst the street across, in Pat McGuigan's, sphendin' ivery dollar he makes, playin' skhinny poker, or some ither Satan's own game av the like. Troth, an' it's poker hell get when he comes back again. Sorry's tha day I ever married him, at all, at all!"

So over to McGuigan's, Cool Kit and pard went, and found Mr. McKelvey in the middle of the room, singing and dancing, alternately, and holding a glass of gin above his head, in one hand, and a roll of bank notes in the other.

"Shure it's dhrinkin' to ould Tipperary, Tipperary! Tipperary!"

Then Michael paused long enough to put down his drink.

He was a typical son of the Emerald Isle, and looked as if he might be able to love it, with the same fervor that he loved the "stomach bitters," which was coloring his nose.

When he had gurgled down the gin, Cool Kit stepped up to him, and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Say, hello, boss—wie ghat's? Be you old Mike McKelvey, the stiff-planter?"

"Paat's that ye say, ye miserable gutter snipe! Moike McKelvey the stiff-planter, is it ye say? Begorra, an' it's a mind to kick the stiffenin' out the loikes av yez, so I have. Stiff-planter, indade! Phy, any one in the town will tell yez that I'm a respectable undertaker. Stiff-planter indade! Shure yez have no respect for tha departed, and yez ought to be trounced within the anches av yer loife!"

"Oat there, now; don't swaller yourself, I was only firin' a stiff at ye. A stiff is a joke, you know. But, come now, you're the Honorable Michael McKelvey, M. P., the undertaker—'M. P.' meanin' money plenty an' mighty polite in yer biz?"

"Arrah, boy, it's strikin' it ye be, now. It's Mike McKelvey I am, and the next delegate to the convintion, from this disthrikt."

"McKelvey! McKelvey, Big Mickey McKelvey, Oh! say did yez ever git onto McKelvey."

But, phat is it you want, boy?"

"We want *you*!" Kit responded, with a serious air. "This gent, here, is a detective, Mr. Yale, an' you're the man we want to see!"

"Well, ye sees me, don't yez?" the manipulator of coffins growled, a belligerent gleam in his eyes. "I'm all here, begorra!"

Yale spoke interposing:

"We called to see you, on a little private business, but before we come to that, let's all imbibe a little Emerald dew."

"Arrah! that's the name for it! But, my friend, if it's bizness ye'd be transactin' ye'll

have to go across the way to the ould woman. Shure she's waitin' for me wid a six-fut poker an' a coffin o' my size right handy."

"Oh! it will not be necessary for you to leave here. Take your drink; then we'll retire to the room yonder, for a bit of private conversation."

The drinks were had, and paid for; then the trio became seated in the next room, the door closed.

Yale, then, said:

"Now, look here, McKelvey, we want you to give us a straight tip about what we are going to ask you, for if you don't, up you go until the case is settled."

"It's about the girrul, thin?"

"Yes—the one you took from the Morgue, this mornin'."

"Saure, I tho't so. Oi've bin ixspectin' to see a copper along afther me."

"Well, if you go straight, no one will be troubled. Where is the girl?"

"By the devil I don't know. She might be in Tipperary for all I know."

"Well, go on and tell what you do know."

"Faith, an' I will do that same. I was vishted by tha loikes av a mon, this mornin', who had a permit, for fotchin' a body from tha Morgue. He wanted me to be afther fotchin' it here, puttin' it in a coffin, an' box afther how he'd be takin' it away, into tha counthry to bury it. Thanekin' it all right, I did tha job, an' a devil a better job ye ever saw, an' afther I hed it all ready, the feller driv' up in a milk-wagon—moind yez, now, a milk-wagon—an' we loaded in the corpus, and he driv' off, not forgittin' to give me two hundrid dollars, when I axed him only for one! That was phat made me think strange, an' be lookin' for the loikes av an ossifer to be throttin' around."

"He had a milk-wagon, eh? What name was on it?"

"Be me soul, I didn't moind, tho' I did take notice av Caesther county."

"What fer horse?" asked Kit.

"Shure an' it was a black horse, wid a big black spot on his tail—no, a big white spot it was."

"What was the width of the wagon-tires?"

"Git out! Paat for d'ye think I'd be measurin' the wagon-tires?"

"Well, describe ther feller."

"He was five fut six, I guesses, slightly built, an' hed hair the color av a well-wornt pair av corduroy breeches, an' a belindy mustache—it's belindy ye call 'em. He had a scar up an' down over wan eyebrow, wore good clothes, a plug hat, an' axed me good-mairnin', an' devil a bit I see'd any more av him."

"Could it be seen that he had the coffin in the wagon?"

"Divil a bit. He let the curth'in down behind, an' there was a high-back seat in froont."

"Which way did he go?"

"North."

"Have you any of the money he paid you?"

"Shure I have. Here's a twinty on the Furst National Bank av Boise City, Idaho, an' devil a bit do I know av sich a bank."

Having his money with him, Cool Kit made an exchange; then he and Yale took their departure.

"So far, so good!" Kit decided, as they walked along. "What d'ye think 'bout our progression so far, Yale College?"

"We've settled one point," the detective answered. "That Boise City note belonged to the girl, and the man, or parties, who have the body, very likely have the rest of the money. But the trail is deucedly faint yet, and it will put us at our wits' end to get on it again."

"Mebbe; but fer all that, we won't throw up ther sponge yet, by a long shot. Ther first next move is ter strike a telegraph-office an' investigate ther case of William and Sarah Walker, of 68 State street, Chicago. After that we must try and find out about the mother and brother of these two Rogers sisters."

The trail, indeed, promised to be long and difficult to follow.

CHAPTER VI.

SUPPOSING THE CASE.

THE telegraph office was visited and a telegram was sent to the Chief of Police, Chicago, viz:

"Find out if William or Sarah Walker, reside at 68 State street, or have lived there. Answer quick."

"YALE, Detective."

"We can now take time ter stow away some grub, in our repository," Kit said, "for I feel as hungry as an Atlantic City muskeeter, in a dull season."

When they returned to the telegraph office, an answer awaited them, from Chicago:

"False address. No such named parties ever there!"

"That settles that part of the question, anyhow," Kit said, in disgust. "Now, does it occur to you what them fellers an' the woman are going to do with ther body?"

Yale remained in a brown study for several minutes, then shook his head:

"No. I'll be hanged if I can form any idea, at all. It is a puzzle to me."

"It's a sockdolager, you bet! But, as I said, once before, there's no give 'er up an' you foller me an' you'll wear diamonds. Now, with nothin' pertic' to work on, let's suppose. I'll propose, an' you kin toll the grist 'cordin' ter yer compunkshuns."

"All right, go ahead. Don't waste breath uselessly, for we may need an unlimited supply, ere long."

"Don't ye fear fer Christofer. I've got more wind than a cyclone what cavorts around, all year. In the first place, s'posin' the gal was murdered; an' we've got it in our noddles thet she wer'. Now what fer was she killed? I opine, because she had money."

"Y-s; that is most probabl'."

"Well, ef murdered for money, the fellers w'ot did et, an' ther feller, Schofield, war in connivance, an' et war a put-up job."

"Good reasoning for a green hand," admitted Yale.

"Takin' et as a plot, there 'peers to be three connivees, at this end o' the route—the young feller, the woman, an' the lawyer, Sands."

"Quite right, again."

"The other feller, Schofield, is supposedly at the other end o' the line, eh?"

"Correct."

"Well, ef the job was put up, ter bleach old man Rogers out o' some o' his surplus, an' these Eastern parties gobble it, et stands purty reasonable thet Schofield gets no plum out er the puddin', unless there's a meetin' atwixt the four."

"Right you are. They will doubtless meet, somewhere, and divide the boodle."

"Not so fast. Now, that's the end-up of round first. Time! Now, then, keepin' on figgerin' on the same slate, the mother of the gals might be dead."

"Very likely."

"An' the son be a durned rascal, such as Phila' aire full of, who wouldn't stop at no dirty crime to bleach some one out o' swag."

"Barely possible. Not many years ago a fellow killed his sister in cold blood to get possession of her cash; I remember the case."

"Jes' so. Well, s'pose some more:—The mother bein' dead, an' the son bein' linked in wif blacklegs, puts up the job to git the gals here, and rob 'em—mebbe to murder 'em bot'. In that case an' the job were did, when old man Rogers paddled off wifout a will, the son would stan' in fer the puddin', eh?"

"Maybe. That would depend a good deal on circumstances, you know."

"True, but a feller who would do all I've bin firin' off, orter be smart enuff ter work the racket. Well, s'posin' havin' killed one gal, an' got away wif her, an' left a fool behind to finish up t'other one, the Son and Co., would start fer Idaho: d'ye think they'd be apt to cart the dead gal along with 'em 'way out there?"

"Heavens no! That would be next to an impossibility; and, what possible object could they have, in so doing?"

"Dunno, 'less they were ter play brigand, and offer the body to old Rogers, fer ransom money."

"Boy! you have some extraordinary ideas!"

"So! Waal, now, boss, ye can bet ther's bin many a meal-time in my life when ideas was all I had to chew on; an' I tho't myself in luck, ef I could wrassle enuff o' 'em to skeer up a supper. But, to s'posin' the case, some more. The gang is either goin' to take the girl back West, or bury her, to-night, out in the country, some- 're's, on the still. Which appears the most probable to you?"

"Why, that they will bury her, of course."

"Then, what did they take her from the Morgue for? The city would have buried her, free gratis."

"Well, as to that, they may have thought Lily would find her sister, and raise a hue and cry of murder, thus exploding the suicide theory, and setting the authorities into action!"

"Well, mebbe ye'r right, but I've got a queer idea ye ain't. I know dashed well they wouldn't try to cart t' corpse 'way out there ef they tho't they were sized up; but, ye see, the general impression has been left that the gal committed suicide."

During this conversation, they had left the telegraph office, and had walked a considerable distance. As they continued along, Yale became silent, and believing him to be in a study, Cool Kit did not urge him to talk, but busied himself with his own thoughts.

Further on, they entered a summer beer-garden, and when they were seated at the table, Yale leaned forward on the table, burying his face in his hands. He did not move for some time; so to arouse him, Kit ordered up the beers.

"Come, Yale," he said, when the glasses were before them, "there's some Dutch disturbance, to keep your wits from getting dry."

The detective raised his head, and Kit perceived, for the first time, that his eyes were tear-filled.

"Why, you snoozer, what's the matter with you? What ye cryin' about?" the Kid demanded, anxiously and wonderingly.

"Oh! nothing much. I guess I don't feel well, and you will have to excuse me from further duty to-day. Come around in the morning, and I will be prepared to work."

They drank the beer, and then Yale arose.

"I'll go home now, I guess. Come around in the morning. Good-night!"

And he was gone ere the King of Kids could express his astonishment.

Kit did not go immediately, but sat a long while, planning and studying; then he took his departure, and for two hours was busy.

First he went to a place where he was able to secure the Directory of that year, and several years back.

The names of the Rogers family were by no means wanting; but among the list he did not seem to find the ones that he calculated were the wife and son of Lily's father.

He next went to the depots, leading out of the city, and telegraphed to all station-agents within a radius of twenty miles, asking if a corpse, accompanied by two or three people, had left such station that day, with orders to report if so; or if any such parties should appear within five days—signing himself Christopher Cool, detective.

This done, he boarded a car, and was soon back once more at the humble home of the Darlings.

CHAPTER VII.

YALE'S SECRET.

ARRIVED at the cottage, Kit was delighted to find Lily sitting up in bed, and talking rationally enough to Dorrit and Doctor Dean.

The sick girl's face lit up with pleasure and anticipation, as she saw the Kid, which Dorrit noticed with a quick heart pang.

"Good-evening, my boy," the doctor said, rising and shaking hands with Kit. "Glad to see you home safe and sound. What do you think of our patient?"

"Why, she looks as well as a spring-chicken in September," Kit declared. "So you've fetched her around sooner than you expected, hey?"

"Well, yes. Miss Rogers will be quite well and able to be out to-morrow. She persists, however, in telling me that she is going on a trail of vengeance, and you are to accompany her. So I have about come to the conclusion that you two are going out West, to kill Indians."

"Nary an Injun on our plate! Thar ain't no credit in killin' Injuns no more. They're purty near petered out, so fur as fun is concerned, you be! The sort o' game we're goin' a-gun-nin' fer is white-faced and black-hearted scoundrels."

"Well, keep your guest quiet, and from conversing on any subject that will tend to excite her in the least, and you will be surprised to see her up ahead of you in the morning."

The physician then departed, refusing positively to take any remuneration for his services, and wishing the young people the best of success.

Lily asked no questions about her sister, much to Kit's relief, and after a little chat with the girls, the youthful detective retired to his bed, feeling pretty well tired out.

He awoke bright and early the next morning, however, feeling much refreshed; but, early as he was up, the girls were ahead of him, and while Dorrit got breakfast Kit and Lily sat on the front door-step, and engaged in conversation.

"You need not be afraid to tell me the particulars now," Lily said, "for the first shock is over, and knowing my sister is dead, I am prepared to hear all, and to brave everything!" Accordingly, in his blunt but kindly way,

the Kid related all that he deemed advisable, of the case, including the mystery of the disappearance of the remains of the ill-fated Cassie.

Lily listened attentively, and although she could but have been deeply grieved, she maintained a sort of stolid composure.

"Do you think we can recover the body?" she asked, when he had finished.

"I do not know. I'll work for that end, Miss Lily, an' work as I never worked before. If we never get the body, the murderer of your sister shall not escape. I'm but a kid yet, but the ruffian or ruffians will find me a King of Kids before I get through!"

"Your efforts, Kit, shall not go unrewarded. My father is a man of wealth and a man of generous impulses, and you do what you can toward solving this mystery and he will make you rich."

"We'll wait till we earn 'em afore we count on riches. Now, I want your father's telegraph address."

"A telegram would reach him at Boise City, Idaho. He is there on business every day. His name is Stephen Rogers."

"Good! Now, as you kin be of but little aid to me to-day, you j-st remain beer; but be ready for the keers at any minnit. I'm let out on the trail, and ther's no tellin' what developments may jump up an' kick a feller 'twixt now an' night. Dotty an' you are gettin' on nice, an' you will be better here than tryin' ter scoot heer an' there wif me."

"I will do just as you recommend. You have proven yourself my friend, and I place implicit trust and confidence in you. You are more than a hero in my eyes."

"That's all square! Jest keep the hero part in yer eyes an' don't let et settle any further down, round yer heart, or Dotty might get jealous."

Breakfast was ready by this time and they partook of a substantial repast, after which Cool Kit took his departure for down-town.

On his way he gave his shabby attire a quiet inspection.

"There's no use o' talkin', these 'ere togs ain't fit fer my biz no more. A feller orter dress 'cordin' ter his persish. Dunno whether I kin afford ter spruce up or not. My bank account aire edgin' down to a transparent thickness."

In telegraphing the night before he certainly had lowered his little stock of funds to an alarming extent. But he resolved to fix up a little at all hazards; so he sought a cheap clothing-house, and soon, at a moderate expense, had so altered his personal appearance that he was startled when he took a view of himself in the glass.

Thus rehabilitated, he proceeded to learn concerning the telegram he had sent the night before.

From the Philadelphia and Reading R. R., were no satisfactory reports, so he next tried the Pennsylvania road, and his heart gave a leap of exultation as he read:

"Corpse and three persons, per description, arrived in milk-wagon to-day, ten-half. Left, next train west, for Washington, Pa."

The dispatch was dated the previous day.

It came from Vila Nova Station, on the main line of the P. R. R.

So that after all, Kit had not missed his reckoning, in believing that the body would be taken westward.

Without delay, he started for the house in which the detective had rooms.

On his arrival, the landlady herself answered his summons.

"Is Mr. Yale in?" Kit asked.

"Mr. Yale, is it? Faith an' he wint into the cimetairy, over yonder, but a bit ago, and ye'll, loike is not find him there, now, sur."

Bowing, Cool Kit made his way to the cemetery indicated—a little-used burial-place—and entered.

After a short search, he found Yale, kneeling beside a grave, and arranging some growing plants.

Kit approached close behind the kneeling man, without being discovered, and read the inscription upon the head-stone, ere Yale looked around:

SACRED

TO THE MEMORY OF

MARGARET YALE ROGERS,

AGED 54 YEARS,

DIED, IN JESUS, MAY 3, 188—.

The perusal caused Kit to utter a little cry of surprise, at which Yale looked up with a start.

"Kit!" he ejaculated.

"It's me, old feller. But, dash me, if I expected to tumble onto a surprise like this!"

"It is just as well you came, for I should have told you to-day. Kit Cool, you are one of the best boys ever born, and you can bet you have a friend, forever, in me. Until you told me about the circumstances of your case yesterday, I had no idea it was my dead sister's face I looked upon at the Morgue, and while I did what I could yesterday, it finally broke me all up, to find I could do so little, while you, a disinterested stranger, were working so faithfully. May God ever bless and prosper you!"

"There, now, don't git broke up again. Ther trail is hotter than ever, an' we'll make Rome howl afore we're done. But, now, tell us about yourself and your mother."

"She died two years ago, in May—may God receive her soul into heaven! I've been a bad boy, in the past, Kit; the report Schofield took West about me, was right, though I do not know the man from Adam. I had a kind, over-indulgent mother, and I spent her money on dissipation, until all but a few hundred dollars was gone, and she died, broken-hearted. Her dying request was that I should be a man, and I have braced up since then, and lived without reproach. The name of Yale—mother's maiden name—we adopted, after the separation."

"It kinder struck me, that somethin' was queer, when you hed tears in yer eyes, last night. But, now, look here; we hain't got no time to spare. Bizness is bizness; ef ye don't take in a cent, an' ye foller me, you'll wear diamonds. After I left you, last night, I telegraphed ter find out where the gang boarded the cars with the body."

Yale brightened up. His despondency and sorrow seemed to vanish, and eagerness to follow the trail was manifested in his eyes.

"We!"

"This mornin' I hit the bull's-eye!"

"What!"

"Surer than hair perdooces electric light, on a cat's back. Heer, read this, will ye?"

Yale glanced over the message.

"Hey! Ain't that persimmons an' lime-juice salad, fer ye? We've struck the trail, fer fact; an' now, that's only one thing that gripes me, in the gripsack: Where's the collat ter come from, to boost us along after the game?"

Yale was silent a moment.

"Don't let that worry you," he finally said.

"I've got no money to speak of, but I can raise some. I have a pair of diamond earrings that cost three thousand dollars. I can realize a thousand on them, at any time; they were to have been a bridal present to a girl I was to be married to, but she jilted me because I made a sot of myself!"

"Then, go leave 'em in care of Uncle Three-Balls, immediately. Time is money, now."

"True. But, let me see: these parties are going to Washington, Pa. If they intend going on West, from there, they will most likely strike for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, take a southwestern course, and then aim for Idaho, direct, thus calculating to throw any possible pursuers off the trail."

"Mebbe. An' they'll embalm the corpse, and take it with them?"

"That would be their only plan if it is their intention to make it the price of a ransom, as now seems to be the only reasonable theory."

"Well, now, I'm purty sky-blue cabbage," Kit declared, with a grin, "but I'll diet on buckshot puddin', ef you ain't ten per cent greener than I am."

"I don't understand you," Yale replied, seriously. "You're sort of an enigma to me, anyhow!"

"Oh! you bet! I'm a fifteen-puzzle, an' can't be worked, unless you steal me a couple o' times. Now, you're purty five-cent shop razor sharp, but didn't it ever occur to you, that there were a creamery at Washington, Pa!"

"A creamery?"

"That's the place! All good people git fired there—everybody!"

"Ah, I see! You mean the Le Moyne crematory!" and a shudder passed over the detective as he mentioned it.

"The very place. Ef the body were cremated there, and the ashes taken West, your father would be apt to redeem them, at almost any price."

Yale's teeth went together.

"What human wretches, be they ever so vile and depraved, could plan such a heinous crime!" he gasped.

"Lots on 'em! Oh! I tells yer, ye ain't onter all the rackets o' this world yit."

"Then, fer Heaven's sake, let's telegraph

to Washington, and have the incineration stopped!"

"We can try. But most likely ther job's did afore this, an' the parties skipped for the West."

Without delay, they sought the main office of the Western Union line, and sent a telegram of inquiry.

The answer came promptly back:

"Incineration took place last evening. Parties gone."
"DR. LE MOYNE."

Consequently, our detectives but too keenly realized that the end was not yet.

CHAPTER VIII.

A BOLD GAME BAFFLED.

THE morning's papers contained the first notice of the identification and removal of the body from the Morgue, but as in the majority of such cases, the notice was confined to two or three lines—the impression being given that it was an everyday case of suicide, for causes unknown, and that was the end of it.

Kit questioned Yale on the matter, and the brother expressed his desire that public opinion should not be further enlightened—at least, until the case had been more fully developed.

The next move was to begin a series of communications by telegraph with Stephen Rogers, at Boise City, in order to obtain needed information from him before venturing to leave Philadelphia in following the criminal fugitives.

The first message sent was as follows:

"STEPHEN ROGERS, Boise City, Idaho:—

"Your daughters have been robbed. What particular enemy have you, who would do you a great and unpardonable injury, barring son and wife?"

Answer quick. SIMON YALE, Detective."

That evening, at six o'clock, they received the reply.

"A former enemy, in a love matter, and again, in a business speculation. If anything more serious than robbery has occurred, inform me at once."

"STEPHEN ROGERS."

"He does not say who this enemy is," Yale said, "and, for my part, I have no idea who it can be. I hardly know how to act, now."

"This is my notion!" Kit said, writing out a message, and submitting it to his partner.

It read:

"STEPHEN ROGERS, etc.:—Cassie murdered. Corpse stolen, and now en route West. Pay no ransom to any one. Hold Schofield. We follow!"

"S. YALE, Detective."

"I guess that is about the most sensible thing we can do!" Yale said. "By Heaven! We'll hunt the devils down, or die in the attempt. Come, now; we will not let the grass grow under our feet. I'll get rid of these diamonds, and we will be heeled," and he tapped his left breast significantly.

They made their way to the extensive pawn-broking establishment, at Ninth and Race streets, where Yale seemed to be pretty well acquainted.

"See here—you've seen these before," he said, to the head clerk, exhibiting a magnificent pair of diamond earrings.

"I think so, Mr. Yale. Vot ish der matter? You want to sell 'em?"

"Oh! no. They belong to my wife, when I'm lucky enough to get one. I'm red-hot after a case that will pay a fortune, and must have money. Loan me all you can."

"Dat ish it? Vel, I gifs you eighteen hundred, three months, an' hope you not come back so soon."

"Oh! I'll be back, if I have to burst a bank. But, give us the money. I've no time to loiter."

The money and ticket were soon dealt out, and Yale and Cool Kit took their departure.

"I'm in luck!" the former said, "for, to tell the truth, I didn't expect to realize more than a thousand on 'em. Here's the eight hundred, an' now we're fixed. We'll get us some extra revolvers, and ammunition, and then for a start."

"Take Lily with us?"

"Of course, but she must not even suspect that I am her brother. I will remain simply Yale, the detective, until I think proper to reveal myself."

And thus it was arranged.

Each one procured a hand-bag, and some changes of needed clothing, and also, each a serviceable pair of revolvers, and plenty of ammunition.

Then they repaired to the Darling cottage where Yale was introduced to Lily and Dorrit.

It was evidently a pretty tough struggle to meet his own sister with the simple courtesy of a mere stranger, but he did it so gracefully that

no thought entered her brain that he was in the least related to her.

After the introduction, Yale engaged in conversation with Dorrit, while Kit called Lily out of the room, supplied her with money, and directed her to a neighboring store where she might make any needed purchases preparatory for their approaching trip.

Thanking him, she sought the store, while Kit proceeded to pack up his old street suit and a boot-black outfit; seeing which, Yale laughed.

"Why, Kit, what in the name of the Apostles are you bundling up that mess of stuff for?" he demanded.

"Oh, they'll come in handy," the King of Kids replied, chucking in half a dozen boxes of Bixby's Best. "Mebbe I may have occasion to play up bootblack in the game, or, ef we should git broke, why, et's a cold friz-up day when I can't earn us one squar' fifteen-cent meal apiece wi' the box."

And with this sally the young sleuth absented himself from the room, for it occurred to him that Yale was making himself agreeable to Dorrit—of which the Kid was in no wise jealous, since his meeting with Lily Rogers.

Time flew fast, and it was nearly dark ere they took their departure for down-town to start for the West, by the night train for Pittsburgh, where they must change cars to visit Washington, Pa.

The trip was devoid of incident, more than that Kit and Lily kept awake pretty much all night and chatted away the time, while Yale slept.

They arrived in Pittsburgh the next morning, and after a short delay, went on to Washington, Pa., where Lily was left at the hotel, and Kit and Yale set out to work up such information as might be available.

A visit to the crematory developed but little additional evidence to that already collected. All they could learn was that a full-bearded man, a sandy-complexioned man, and a young woman, evidently French, had brought the body of a girl, called Alice Clare, there for incineration, which took place, when the parties left with the dead girl's ashes in a silver vase.

They took all the clothing with them except a gold breast-pin, inlaid with pearls, which had been accidentally overlooked. This Dr. Le Moyne surrendered on seeing Yale's badge.

When shown the pin, Lily at once identified it as having belonged to her sister.

The next thing to be done, was to make inquiries at the station, as to the route taken by the three, and had no difficulty in finding out.

They had bought tickets for Columbus, Ohio, and had asked for tickets through to Cairo, Illinois.

"That settles it!" Cool Kit cried, jubilantly.

"They ar' as fly sharps as ever was born, with wings, an' don't you fergit it. They're making fer Boise City, sure's guns shute mud-hens."

"You are right. It must be they've got wind they are followed, or I hardly think they would take so much precaution in their movements. From Cairo, they will take the steamer up the Mississippi, to some point north, where they will again resume the trip by rail. Our point, is to aim direct through to Davenport, where all the river steamers stop, and go from there to Burlington by water, leaving orders to have all boats spotted at Davenport, so we can nail 'em at Burlington."

"Good! Big head! Let's git!"

So they took the next train back to Pittsburgh. Here Yale secured disguises for the party, and then they took the Pittsburgh and Fort Wayne route for Chicago, from whence to go to Davenport, Iowa.

As they had seats in a parlor car, the trip was very pleasant, until it came night, when one by one dropped off into sound repose.

Cool Kit was the first to awaken, but what caused him to do so was more than he could say.

His first thought, naturally, was of Lily and Yale, but they were sleeping soundly in their respective chairs.

"I'll be blowed ef I know what ever woke me!" Kit muttered. "Twasn't no small thing, or I'm a fool."

He took a glance at the passengers in the car. In the seats across the aisle, were two poorly-dressed, country-fied-looking old people, both of whom were gray, and carried canes. They appeared to be enjoying the favors of King Morpheus in the most approved style, for the old man gave vent to snores that seemed to make the lamps rattle, so Kit thought at least.

In order to see the rest of the people, he must

get to the front of the car, and view them as he returned to his seat; so he made for the water-cooler, under pretense of getting a drink.

Taking a drink, he turned and took a lightning glance, up and down the car, not missing a seat.

Not a person there but what was apparently asleep.

The only individual, upon whom Cool Kit's gaze fell with any particular scrutiny, was a great lumbering fellow who occupied a seat, midway up the car. He was a massive individual, and lay sprawled back in his chair in an attitude that did not favor comfortable rest.

He was attired in a loud checkered suit, which fitted him skin-tight, wore no collar nor shirt-front ornaments, and had his roughed-up plug hat crammed back on his head. Over his face was spread a bandana handkerchief, concealing his countenance from view.

This man Kit "spotted" at once.

"All right, me bucko! I've got my eye on you!" the youth muttered, as he made his way back to the other end of the car, and flopped himself down in his chair. "Just you try any funny biz an' see ef I won't nail ye. It strikes me right under ther first rib, north, thet I've got onter yer style, somewheres."

He desisted from awakening Yale and Lily, as he reasoned that there could not possibly be any danger on the train; so settling himself back in an easy position, in his chair, he drew a long breath, closed his eyes, and to all appearances, went to sleep again.

His face was so turned that he could watch the movements of three persons, without turning his head.

They were the two old country people, and the big man behind the bandana.

And why the old couple?

To the sharp eyes of the ferret they were suspiciously old.

The fact that the end of the old lady's nose, was powered white, as was the tip of the chin, and the throat, at once arrested his attention and excited his suspicion.

"That aire don't jibe well," he mused, "and durn me ef they look bumped-up an' shaky enuff, fer old people. Mebbe I'm s'posin' an' imaginin' too much, but I'll watch mighty close."

Later, when the conductor went through the cars, yelling out:

"Fort Wayne. All out, for Fort Wayne," Cool Kit was just as wide-awake as ever, but neither Yale nor Lily aroused.

When the train stopped at the station, Kit left the car for an instant, more to see what the suspected parties would do than anything else.

While out, he saw that there were several sleeping cars and one parlor car ahead, and that the car they were traveling in was the last one on the train—"the tail end o' the biz," as he remarked to himself.

When he returned to his seat, he made a discovery that struck him rather singularly, whether there was any occasion for it, or not.

Every parlor passenger, with the exception of himself, Yale, Lily, the old couple, and the checkered-suited man, had left the train! There were only six passengers to go on in the car, to Chicago.

After the train had pulled out of Fort Wayne, the conductors soon came in and secured the tickets, after which they and the brakeman, and porter, went back in the forward car.

"If there's any music in the air, the band's goin' to toot, twixt here and Chicago," Kit muttered. "We're all alone, now, an' ther's a ripe chance fer a muss!"

If the old couple and the big "snoozer," were in league, as Kit suspected, then no doubt they would make their presence manifest, in the same isolated section between Fort Wayne, and Chicago.

How to awaken Yale without attracting attention was a puzzle to Kit, but he finally hit upon a plan.

Going into the closet, he was able to write on a piece of paper, with pencil, the words:

"Danger. Keep awake, and ready!"

Returning to his seat, he peered out of the window awhile, as if trying to see the lay of the country.

Finally he reached over, seized Yale's hand, and shook it, at the same time cramming the note into it, dextrously, and closing the fingers over it.

"Hurra, boss, wake-up!" Kit cried. "I guess we're purty near ter Chicago!"

Yale sat up, rubbed his eyes, sleepily, with the hand that did not contain the note.

"Git out! We ain't nowher's near Chicago,"

he growled. "Blame it, can't you let a feller sleep?"

After awhile he rose and lunched toward the water-cooler, got a drink, and in doing so read Kit's note, without any one being the wiser for it.

When he returned to his seat, he growled:

"It's all right. We ain't near Chicago. Got plenty o' time ter snooze yet. Wake me ag'in fore it's time, an' I'll break your jaw!" and he settled himself back, apparently for a renewal of his nap.

Kit also settled himself back and closed his eyes, but had his weapons ready for instant use in case of emergency.

The train tore swiftly along through the starless night—a night as dark as Kit had ever seen, he thought—and still "the band did not begin to toot."

Perhaps, after all, it was a false alarm. The three people might easily be the most innocent in the world of any wrong intention.

Kit was about half-ready to believe this when he saw an uneasy movement on the part of the man with the checkered suit, who began coughing in a consumptive manner, and finally, apparently unable to compose himself, arose and staggered toward the front of the car, the state-rooms soon hiding him from view.

"Now, then, the band will soon toot!" Kit muttered, nerving himself. "I'm onter thet bloke's racket, tho' I couldn't git a peep at his phiz. We're roundin' a curve, now, an' he's goin' ter cut off this car!"

He saw by an uneasy movement of Yale that he was awake and doubtless thoroughly alive to the situation.

Kit's prophecy soon assumed definite shape. There was an agitation of the bell-cord, and then it slackened as it loosened; a moment more and the speed of the car began to lessen. The King of Kids was on his feet, his two revolvers leveled upon the old couple from the country.

"Quick, Yale!" he cried. "Git to the front, and capture the big fellow!"

The elder detective glided to the front of the car, and as the big sport re-entered, dealt him a blow with a revolver that knocked him senseless.

In the mean time, the 'old' couple had sprung to their feet, with snarls of surprise and stood glaring at their youthful captor, in speechless rage.

"Oh! you daisies, but we've got ye tho'," Kit cried, coolly. "Move a peg an' I'll make more air-holes thru' ye than there is in a sieve. Hi! there, Yale! Secure the big bloke, so he can't git away, an' then come an' help this aged pair. I've got 'em where they durst not haul in their cold deck!"

Yale had not come unprepared, for he handcuffed the sport, and bound his feet in a moment and then came back to help Kit.

"This is an outrage!" the old man blustered. "I'll not stand it!"

"Oh! yes yer will!" Kit declared. "Ef ye don't, ye'll go on ter Chercawgo as dead freight. Jest put out yer paws an' let ther captin' fit on the metallic cuffs which are warranted ter cure inflammatory conditions. See, ther car is stoppin', but kidnappin' ain't no good, sech nights as these."

In less time than it takes to tell it, they, too, had been made prisoners, and moved up to the forward end of the car, so that the trio could be better guarded, together.

Then it was that Cool Kit made a startling discovery.

The big fellow in the striped suit, was none other than Mike McGill, the fellow with whom he had the trouble on the Ridge Avenue car!

"Hello! I've seen that chap before," he said, to Yale, and followed by explaining the street-car difficulty. "It's all clear as Christmas, now. These 'ere gay people were left behind ter kill or capture the gal!"

"Evidently, you are right. It's lucky we captured even them. I wonder how far the train will go without discovering we are left behind?"

"Not fur, you bet! The train were goin' up grade a leetle, I reckon; anyhow, she war goin' fast enough, so that when this car dropped off, the engine must 'a' felt it. You watch! I'll go flag 'em!"

Getting a lantern, from the rear end of the car, Cool Kit went to the front platform, and signaled for the return of the train. He had not long to wait.

He soon saw 'a' signal light coming slowly around the curve, and answered with his own lantern, vigorously, and a couple of shrieks of the locomotive whistle told him that the train was backing.

The train soon reached the detached car, when the conductor yelled out:

"What the devil's the matter, here? Who uncoupled this car, and cut the bell-rope?"

"Oh! a tray ov bright buggers, inside, who were playin' a bigger game then they c'd handle!" Kit replied. "There happened to be a pair o' us, tho', who were on to their little racket an' we tuk 'em in out of the fog. Got 'em all ready fer the hearin'!"

Considerable excitement ensued, when the true state of affairs became known, and Cool Kit and Yale received great praise for their bravery.

By a private consultation with the conductor, to whom was made known some of the facts of the case, it was decided to hold the trio in Chicago simply on the charge of attempted train-robbery.

"You see," Yale explained to Kit, "it will be difficult to establish the fact before a police court, that they had designs of kidnapping Lily without we give the whole case to the public, and thereby incur considerable delay. The simple charge of attempted train-robbery will bind them over to court, and give us a chance to go on with our case, and to work out further developments. It is my opinion that these people are merely stay-behinds, left to secure Lily, or, failing in that, to join the main party at some given point. It is now evident that, unknown to us, we have been shadowed, and instead of being the trailers, we have been the trailed. It was evidently the duty of these scoundrels to watch, which they did with a cunning peculiar to the sharpest of their craft. But for you, Kit, we two would have had an awakening in some other climate, and Miss Lily, here, would have been in the power of the originators of this infernal plot. Again, I have to extend to you my heartiest gratitude, and certainly agree with you that you are the King of Kids!"

"Oh! now, say—give's a rest. I'd rather wrastle a fifteen-cent beefsteak, any time, than swaller flattery. But, you don't think this is the party w'ot's got the ashes?"

"No!" And Yale's eyes sparkled venomously. "If I did I'd kill them all the next minute, if I had to hang for it. No! The other parties are on the other route, and, although they have a good start of us, we will intercept them yet, if pluck and Philadelphia street-Arab craft can do it."

So it was agreed to settle the trio in Chicago, on the charge before mentioned, and then go on to Davenport.

The conductor was a sensible sort of fellow, in good standing on the road, and promised to use what influence he could to have the trio bound over to court, without bail, so as to enable Yale and Kit to pursue their case to its end.

The "old" couple preserved a strict silence, and seemed nerved for some desperate action, should a chance be afforded them.

Mike McGill recovered, after awhile, and expressed himself in language more forcible than polite, when he found that he was "locked."

After he had been left to "blow off a good head of steam," he cooled down for awhile, and then beckoned to the conductor.

"Where's the boy?" he demanded. "Sind me the boy—I want to see him."

Hearing the request, Cool Kit glided forward, and the Irishman took a good look at him from top to toe.

"Well, by me sowl, it's a cute kid ye are, now ain't ye?" he finally demanded, an expression of grim humor upon his rather unprepossessing visage.

"Waal, I should elucidate!" Kit replied, putting his thumbs to his arm-pits. "Ther ain't a town meetin' bull that's livelier on the 'mash,' bet yer checkered suit on that, Mike. Yer done up an' done fer now. Who put up the togs fer ye?"

"Never ye moind now, boy. Ax me no questions. Where ye goin' to take us?"

"Oh! first, to Chicago. You'll hev a nice trip; ye kin take in all the jokes—a cell, now an' then—an' they have a daisy steady lodgin'-house, out around the margin o' the city, somewhere's, so, don't be the least bit worried, Mike. You'll be han'somely pervided fer, an' tho' they can't give ye Philadelphia Ninth-and-Sansom-street suits, out here, they kin give ye stripes in place o' the checkers, an' that's the prevailin' fashion."

McGill groaned aloud.

"Say, 'pon me honor, 'twa'n't me fault I got into this devil's own schrapel!" he whined. "Be dacent and aisy wid me, an' I'll be a friend to yez, all me life!"

"All right, Mike. Out here in Chicago, they dish friendship out on a big brass key, for free lunch. So along, now! Take care of yourself! Hope yer eye don't pain you, for ye ain't much gud at eye-shuttin', anyhow!" and with a tantalizing laugh Kit retired to where Yale was seated.

"There's a case of turn-coat evidence, eh?" the latter said.

"Not much!" Kit declared, emphatically. "He might want to play that mazurky, but ye won't ketch me dancin' to et, nary a time. That feller has got more snake in his eyes than ever St. Patrick kicked out of Ireland!"

And through the dark, gloomy night, with now and then a drop of rain splashing against the window, the train rolled on toward the City of the Lakes.

CHAPTER IX. STILL EN ROUTE.

WHEN Chicago was reached, Yale handed over the prisoners to the proper authorities, while Kit escorted Lily to a hotel, and secured accommodations for the three.

Lily was considerably elated, as well as excited, over the capture of the people, who, without a doubt, meant her harm, and she thanked Cool Kit warmly for his bravery. By tender glances and sweet smiles, she betrayed the fact that he was to her a hero, and the idol of her impulsive girlish heart.

As for Kit, he had to resort to his old-time fashion of scratching his head, when in perplexity.

"Golly!" he thought, "it's nice to have a young gal sweet on you, but, hang it, what is a feller goin' to do? It takes money to run a kitchen an' sittin'-room, however humble; an' then—hang it! I wonder if I hain't older than I calylate, an' ef sum rich miserly uncle won't die, an' leave me his boots—full of money?"

Her wiles and witchery finally proved too much for Kit, and he turned upon her, with a grimace:

"Now, see here, Lily; s'posen' we eat some eyesters, jest fer a change. I've heard Jersey-men say that eyesters were the best thing fer palpitation of the heart, an' ef mine ain't thumpin' like a base drum on a St. Patrick's day's parade, I'll eat beeswax all my life!"

"Oh! my! I am so sorry. Have you heart disease, Kit?" Lily asked, with well simulated anxiety, although there was a roguish twinkle in her eyes.

"No, by jingo, no! It's the eyester disease. I'll ring the bell for five dozen extras, fried. I wish Yale would return. Dash me ef he ain't the pokiest feller I ever see'd. I—I—"

He was getting a good red color, and Lily burst into a merry laugh, as she threw her arms about his neck.

"Why, Kit, you are the most bashful goose I ever saw. But, there, now," with a charming little hug. "I'm ready for the oysters, only for mercy's sake, don't order five dozen!"

Kit felt relieved, when she released him.

"Why, can't you eat six?" queried he.

"Oh! yes, but—"

"Oh! I'll attend to the other four dozen and six. I'm the champion eyester eater of Manayunk."

So Kit ordered "two fries" and about the time they were served, Yale sauntered into the parlor, and another order was given.

"The hearing will take place at two, this afternoon," the detective announced and everything is arranged, so that we can take a four o'clock train, West."

"How erbout ther old couple?"

"Oh! they have been stripped of their disguises, and turn out to be a pair of old offenders on the criminal list, known both here and in Philadelphia."

The case was called on, at the appointed hour, and Kit, and Yale were present, to testify.

The facts of the case were quickly taken, and McGill and the other pair, known as Frank and Jane Shie, were bound over to court, and locked up, in default of bail.

As their business had now terminated, so far as Chicago was concerned, the trio took cars for Davenport, where they arrived, that evening, but too late for the transaction of any business.

The next morning, as they were likely to remain the day out in Davenport, the following, was wired, to Stephen Rogers:

"We are here, lying in wait. Have you nailed Schofield?"
SIMON YALE, Det."

Considering the advance the fugitives had in the start, there was a bare possibility that they might already have passed Davenport.

A schedule of time for sailing, and steamers, was procured, and the party timed from Pittsburgh to Columbus, Columbus to Cairo, and Cairo, by steamer, to Davenport.

"Not if we are guessing their route, correctly, they have not yet passed this place," Yale finally decided, "allowing them the fastest time they could make. Nor, do I look for them to do so, for several days, yet."

"And, to sum up yer genuine opinion, you don't think they take the river route, after all?" Kit queried.

"To tell the truth, I don't know. I'm a good deal puzzled as to what course they will take, or what course we had better pursue."

The reply to the telegram they had sent to Stephen Rogers, at Boise City decided them. It was simply:

"No. Schofield can't be found. Is known to be in the vicinity."
S. R.

"That settles it. Schofield is awaiting the arrival of the main party at some given point," Yale decided. "We can't do better than to aim direct for Boise City by the quickest route."

"Very well."

Fatigued and travel-worn, they at last arrived in Boise City, where Cool Kit had telegraphed Stephen Rogers to meet them.

CHAPTER X. IN BOISE CITY.

THE mining speculator, as he proved to be, met them at the train. He was a white-haired, weather-beaten, and yet noble and commanding appearing old gentleman, and the news of Cassie's fate having got abroad, there were a large number of sympathizing friends present to greet the return of the old man's remaining child.

The scene of the meeting of father and daughter was pathetic, in the extreme, and there was scarcely a dry eye in the crowd.

As soon as possible, and after brief introductions, the quartette took a carriage, and were hurried away to the nearest hotel, out of reach of the curious eyes of the crowd.

Here, Lily explained everything to her father, of course eulogizing the heroic action that Cool Kit and Yale had taken in her behalf, and the old man thanked them with all imaginable fervor, and promised that their kindness should not escape a suitable reward.

Kit and Yale withdrew then, and left the father and daughter to themselves.

The elder detective was very pale, it evidently having been a severe struggle to meet his parent, face to face, and not acknowledge his own identity.

"Hang it, ef ye hain't got the nerve ov a wooden Pawnee!" Kit declared, admiringly, when they were alone. "Why, I came near heavin' the cat out o' the sack myself."

"Don't you do it!" Yale replied, quietly. "When I feel disposed, I will make myself known, if indeed, the old gent don't tumble sooner. When some of the excitement wears away he will doubtless recall the fact that mother's name was Yale."

They made no attempt to see the father and daughter again that night, but retired early, and got a much-needed rest.

In the morning, Mr. Rogers sent for them.

He was now thoroughly composed, and looked prepared for the work that yet lay before him.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I have learned more fully from my daughter the details of your noble work in her behalf, and no words can express my appreciation of the service. You have done what I hope will make you famous and honored in your chosen profession, the country over, and, as I said before, my bank account is at your command."

"I will leave my young friend here to arrange all such matters, when we have completed the job we undertook," replied Yale. "Mr. Cool, a newsboy of Philadelphia, with the energy and shrewdness of a dozen men, was the originator of all that has yet been found out and done."

"To him belongs the credit and whatever compensation you may see fit to bestow. I was interested in the case through his shrewdness and indomitable pluck, and volunteered to give him the benefit of any assistance my professional badge might afford."

"Oh, dry up!" broke in Kit. "That is too thin. You—"

"That's all right; you are entitled to all the credit," Yale persisted, with a look that checked Kit from saying anything about the diamond transaction, which he was on the point of introducing.

"I understand that but for our young friend I should not even now know of my daughter's tragic fate, and also that but for his timely intervention, Lily would likely have shared a like fate," Mr. Rogers said, gratefully; "and henceforth I will afford him, as part compensation, every facility for rising to the position of one of the foremost men of the day."

"Oh, that's all right—let that take keer of itself for the present," Kit said. "There's more of 'portance scrapin' my mind than that. I'm anxious now to git after them snoozers w'ot think they're so sharp."

"Yes; we must work up the case as fast as possible," Yale said; "and any data you can furnish, that will be of use to us, will hasten the consummation of the vengeance I know you must crave."

"Vengeance I do crave," Stephen Rogers cried, "and vengeance I will have! I telegraphed you that there was but one man whom I believed could be guilty of doing me an unpardonable injury. I will now endeavor to make clear to you all about the matter."

"I do not reside here, in Boise City, but ten miles to the north, at a little settlement we call Bed Rock, where I have some mining interests—in fact, one of the best gold and silver lodes in the locality."

"Three years ago, when the mine was discovered, I took in with me as half-partner a man named Samuel Slaughter, and whom, from what you have said, I believe to be the so-called Samuel Sands who met my children in Philadelphia. He was rather a prepossessing individual, with the bearing and general appearance of a gentleman, and as he came from Helena well recommended, and claimed to be an expert accountant, I concluded I could not do better than avail myself of his services, as I was in need of just such a man. So I gave him a half-interest in the revenue of the mine, for so long a time as he should prove trustworthy and attentive to our business interests."

"Time passed along, and things ran smoothly. He gained my confidence, and little by little drew from me the history of my past life in detail, and pretty nearly all about my affairs in general. However, as my daughters were away at school, it chanced that they never saw him, which accounts for their not recognizing him, if that was he, in Philadelphia."

"When the mine was opened and began to pay pretty well, I suddenly awoke to the discovery that I was being robbed, and was not long in tracing the crime directly to Slaughter, and forcing him at the point of a pistol, into a confession. I then gave him an hour to get out of the reach of the law, and he was not slow to accept the terms—although he took an oath that he would be revenged upon me."

"I heard nothing more about him, until about a year ago, when a miner died, and left me guardian over his daughter and estate. A few months after his death, I learned that this daughter, a young, giddy-headed girl, had a lover, who was in the habit of meeting her, clandestinely. From what I could learn, the man was Samuel Slaughter."

"I at once visited the girl, and gave her fatherly counsel and advice, but she was naturally headstrong, and without directly opposing my will, she seemed to make light of my advice. So with my mind fully made up, I set spies to work, and was not long in developing the fact that they were to elope."

"I made the fact known to the miners, and getting all arranged we intercepted the turtle-doves, and gave Slaughter the worst dose of tar and feathers there was in the camp, and we had a half-barrel of tar and a couple of feather-beds at that."

"We then tied him to a buckin' burro, with a cactus bur under its tail, and sent him a-flyin'. The girl I sent away to her relations. I did not hear of Slaughter again, until three months afterward, when he sent me a letter, with a skull and cross-bones on it, the simple wording of which was:

"I am not dead, yet. S. SLAUGHTER."

"I paid no particular attention to it, however, until I received your Philadelphia telegrams, when the terrible truth dawned upon me, that it was he who had struck for vengeance! May the eternal curses of an injured parent consume him!"

"He is undoubtedly the man!" Yale decided, "and now that we know the particulars I do not think it will be very hard for us to run him down, as soon as the party arrives in this vicinity."

"I am not so sure of that. The fate of my poor child is known, here, in Boise City, and the

fact of your arrival, is also known. It don't take long for news to spread out here, you can bet. This man Schofield hung about town a few days after bringing the news which took my daughters East, under pretense of looking for an opportunity for investment; then he disappeared. I have, since receiving your telegrams, learned that he has been seen lurking in the vicinity. So, you see, he may be in town, now, in disguise, and, hearing of your arrival, will warn the other parties to lie low, for awhile!"

This was reasonable.

"That's so," Yale admitted, "and we're not in Philadelphia, where we know the ropes, either."

Cool Kit was silent a few minutes, his fingers creating a disturbance in his hair.

"D'ye intend ter stay hyer in Boy's City?" he finally asked, of the speculator.

"Not unless it is necessary. I have business duties both here and at Bed Rock, but I generally run up here once a day. My real home is there."

"Well, now, I've got kinder of an idea, ef ye want'er hear it."

"Judging by what you have already done, we can all take advice from you," Mr. Rogers said, with a smile.

"Well, here goes! We'll all pack off fer yer home at once, an' we won't be no ways shy about lettin' folks know we're goin'. See?"

"Well?"

"When we get to Bed Rock, I'll fix up, and come back. But, wait. I'll be back in a moment."

He skurried away, and soon returned with his old newsboy-bootblack suit, and blacking paraphernalia.

"Now, Mister Yale, ef ye belonged heer in Boise, an' you war to meet me as I look in this rig-out, dirt an' etsettery included, d'ye think ye'd reckonize me as the same feller I am now?"

"I hardly think I should," Yale replied candidly.

"Then, that settles et!" Kit said. "I come back heer, an' go ter shinin' boots, while you take things cool and easy. Ef I can't pick up some points no one can."

Mr. Rogers looked inquiringly at Kit, then at Yale.

"Let him try it," the latter advised; "I'll guarantee he'll take care of himself, where we couldn't."

"You bet on me bein' all hunk!" Kit cried. "Wait till I s'prise some o' these Western fellers wi' my patent-leather, duplex-action shine."

"Very well, my boy; you shall have your way," Mr. Rogers assented. "I will go out and order a conveyance to take us to Bed Rock."

"And, by the way, I think I'll accompany you," Yale remarked, with a peculiar twinkle in his eye, for he had already noticed that his sister was very partial to Kit.

"Oh! you snoozer!" thought Kit, who "tumbled" to his partner's game. "I'm onto you with both feet. You want me to setup the oysters again. Well, I might as well prepare for another siege of heart disease. Gosh! I begin to feel giddy, already."

And well he might, for Mr. Rogers and Yale were little more than out of the parlor, ere Lily was beside the King of Kids, and her pretty eyes looking appealingly down into his.

CHAPTER XI.

CAUGHT FOUL!

"Kit, I'm so afraid you will get harmed," Lily said, passing her fair hand over his forehead and pushing back the mass of matted curls, that would grow down there. "You might be all right, in Philadelphia where they have policemen to protect you boys, but out here, it is different. The men are so wild an' rough!"

Kit laughed at the idea.

"Perlicemen pectect us kids?" he ejaculated. "Well! I should go giggle! Why, you've got the barouche before the geldings, Lil. It's us kids w'ot pectects ther perlicemen, out in Phila! Ef a couple sluggers gits ter maulin' each other, we allers gives the copper a friendly tip ter amble 'round ter ther furthest part o' his beat, 'ca'se how, ef he was ter interfere, he'd get sot down on, in about two holy seekints. Oh! no; don't you git skeered about me gittin' hurt. I tell yer, when I get ter shinin' 'em up, fer the fellers, I'll elervate societv 'round here, an' every feller will think he's a billionaire."

"But, Kit, I am so afraid. You know if any harm were to come to you, how badly I would feel. I love you, Kit, from the bottom of my heart—"

"There! by the mud-hens o' Jersey, I know'd

it. You've gone and did it, just w'ot I expected!"

"Done what, Kit?"

"Exploded—popped! Oh! Jerusalem! S'posin' Dorrit was heer, tho'—wouldn't thar be hair-pullin'? Well! well!"

"No, I don't think there would be, Kit. I guess Dorrit transferred her affection from you to Mr. Yale, before we left the East."

"D'ye really think so?"

"Yes. Anyhow, it looked to me as if they were pretty well pleased with each other. So, now, Kit, there isn't any excuse in the world, why—why—" but she could not finish the sentence.

Kit rubbed the end of his nose, and grinned, comically.

"Say, see here, you're after another mess of eyesters, ain't ye?" he queried.

"No, I'm not. How provoking you are!"

"I'll be gosh-hanged if I am. But, say, is this the way the gals do, up here—'pop,' on their own hook?"

"Well—yes. This is leap year, you know. But come, now, Kit, don't you like me?"

"Like you!" Kit echoed, gathering her in his embrace. "Wal, I should smile! I'd like nothin' better than ter eat ther grass your angelical feet trampled on. But—hist! here comes Yale, and the guv'nor."

Which put an end to that little love-making episode.

Yale and Mr. Rogers entered the parlor, to find both Kit and Lily with very rosy cheeks, at which the detective secretly smiled.

"Well, children, we have drummed up a 'hearse' to convey us to Bed Rock," Mr. Rogers announced, "and it is in waiting. So get ready, and we'll be off."

"A hearse?" Kit echoed. "Say, now, look here, Mr. Rogers, what you giving us? You don't ketch me ridin' in no hearse afore my time comes. I'd rather fut it."

"Oh! that's all right, Kit," Yale explained. "Out here they call a stage a 'hearse.'"

"Oh! I see. That must be why the papers call a theater a Morgue. Waal, I should rehearse!" Kit punned.

"Here! here! No more such jokes as that!" Yale protested. "They hang a man out here for joking."

"No. I'll be hanged if they do. But let's skip."

They were soon aboard the coach, and rolling away, a crowd having collected in front of the hotel to see them off.

Four spirited horses hauled the stage, and the trip to Bed Rock was made in good time.

Here, too, Mr. Rogers and Lily were warmly and sympathizingly greeted by the few miners and their families who made the town their abode.

It was but a small gathering of shanties and buildings, belonging to the mine-proprietor—that of Mr. Rogers being the most conspicuous dwelling of the lot.

Here the parties remained quartered for the day, as Kit had decided not to return to Boise City until under the cover of darkness.

He made his preparations, however, with the coolness and sangfroid characteristic of the matter-of-fact street Arab.

Yale and Mr. Rogers quizzed him repeatedly, to find out if he had any fear as regards what peril he might encounter, but he only laughed at them good-naturedly, and replied in the negative.

"Oh! let him go," Yale said, "and if he don't pick up the trail I'll lose my reckoning. Tomorrow, in disguise, I too will go to the city, so as to be near at hand should he get into any trouble."

As soon as it became dark, Kit bade Yale and Mr. Rogers good-by, and arrayed in his old-time regalia, with blacking outfit slung to his back, he took his departure, Lily insisting on accompanying him a short distance.

At their parting, she clung to him, affectionately, until, with a kiss, he bade her good-by, and trudged away on his journey.

"Hyar I am, now, 'Frisco Frank!"

A fu'st-class feller, an' nary a crank,
Kin lick a lion or big bull-pup,
An' fer ha'f a dime, I'll shine 'em up."

"Reckerlect, feller-citizens, I'm the gold-medal shiner from ther city o' San Francisco. I'm sixteen years old, hev made sixteen voyages around the earth, jumped over the Rockies, an' landed down hyer in Boise City, ter show ye that yer' sixteen centuries behind ther times, fer not hev'in' yer boots shined bright enuff ter reflect all ther beauties o' Jupiter, Saturn and

Venus. I hev shined ther diamonded-studded brogans uv every king, emperor an' prince in ther world, polished ther bare feet o' ther man-eatin' king o' ther ham-Sandwich Islands, an' heer I am, gents, fresh over frum 'Frisco, ter put a complexion outer yer dirty number 14's! So walk right up an' git dumfounded fer only a nickle—five cents only—ther twentieth part o' a dollar. Who's ther first magnate who wants ter represent this mighty nation?"

It was Cool Kit who uttered this harangue, as he took his stand on the sidewalk in front of one of the foremost hotels of the Queen City of Idaho.

Ragged, mud-splashed, bare-footed and bare-headed, and with a face so black-streaked and dirty as to effectually destroy his identity, the King of Kids thus addressed the considerable crowd of men lounging about the veranda—men of many costumes and many characters, from the border bully to the refined gentleman of leisure.

"Come, now, roll up, tumble up, any way ter git up. I'll shine 'em fer ye till they'll dazzle yer eyes so you'll hev ter war green goggles ter keep from gittin' sea-sick. Why, durn my skin, ther ain't a pair o' boots in the crowd fit to wear ter see a widder arter her ole man's funeral. Who's ther fu'st chap who'll be an honor ter the name o' Idaho, by hev'in' his boots shined?"

A big, burly individual, chock-full of "ben-zine," came staggering out of the hotel and descended the steps to where Kit had taken his stand.

"Hillo!" he cried, hoarsely. "Look at ther monkey! Whar's ther organ-grinder?"

"Hurtin' fer a baboon. Want er job?" retorted Kit.

"Say, luck a-heer, yonker, w'ot d'ye'r say? Cuss my butes, but I've a mind ter smack ye. I want ye ter know I'm a terror, I am—Howlin' Jake, the slugger, w'ot kin lick Sullivan or any other man!"

In an instant Kit was upon his feet, dancing about, with his arms thrown out in true pugilistic style.

"I'll jest bet ye don't, cully, when I am about," he declared, with a grin and wink. "Ye never hearn tell o' Paddy Ryan's brother, did ye? Say—tell ye what I'll do, boss; I'll bet ye two ter one I kin knock ye out in one round!"

The crowd laughed at the boast, and that was precisely what Kit wanted. The sooner he worked himself into popularity as a bootblack, or roustabout, the less liability there was of his identity being discovered.

The bully seemed to regard Kit's antics with a sort of grim humor.

"Waal, I'll be cussed!" he snorted. "Ye put me in mind o' a little banty, spurrin' up to a big game-cock."

"An' sometimes the big game-cock gits combed," Kit replied, still dancing about. "Oh! jest cum an' see me, Moriarity, an' let me soak ye one in the second flat."

The crowd on the veranda roared again, and bystanders began to collect to see the sport.

The "terror" was evidently not a gross-dispositioned fellow, for he took things good-naturedly, considering the amount of "booze" he had on board.

"See heer," he said, steadying himself upon his feet. "I'm an old heart-breakin' hard-head from Horror Gulch, an' I kin clean out ther town ef I'm er mind to. Now, yer' a spunky rabbit, an' I'll tell ye what I'll do. I'll put my left hand behin' me back, an' spar ye wi' me right, pervidin' you'll agree not to squeal, if you git a crusher in ther nose. Ef you git in a tap on my mug, 'nuff sed. I'll give ye a dollar apiece ter shine up ther hull crowd."

"A bargain!" Kit quickly accepted. "Square off, and look out fer yerself!"

The crowd now became wildly enthusiastic, as Western crowds always do when there is any fun brewing.

Howlin' Jake put his left hand behind his back, and with his right fist on guard, struck a pugilistic attitude.

For a few minutes there was some fair sparring, and Jake struck out three terrific blows, any one of which, had it hit the Arab, would have settled the contest.

But the King of Kids wasn't getting hit. He was as light on his feet as a chipmunk, and his dancing and ducking movements, evidently annoyed his adversary, who appeared to have a fair knowledge of the manly art.

Bets were freely made among the spectators, as to how the contest would end.

They were destined to be quickly decided, for jumping here, then there, with agility, and

watching his man like a hawk, Cool Kit finally struck out.

Thwack!

The sound of the blow was audible, for yards around, and Kit landed lightly back upon his feet.

Fairly had he planted his fist over Howlin' Jake's left eye, and with no boyish force either.

The bully, at the instant, had his back toward the street, in which, just off the sidewalk, was a large puddle of muddy water.

So quick and hard was Kit's right-hander, that it knocked Howlin' Jake clean off his pins, and landed him upon his back, in the water.

Without awaiting further developments, Kit seized his box, and began to yell:

"Here ye go, now—who wants er shine. Only a nickel—half a dime—reg'lar down-East prices, same as they hev in New Yorick. Whar's the man, willin' to squander ther twentieth part of a dollar?"

"Heigh! hello!" roared Jake, gaining a sitting posture. "Every durned galoot gits his boots blacked, at my expense, I tell yer. I ain't no hog ef I do waller!"

He got up, shook himself, and reaching into his pocket, drew out five twenty-dollar gold-pieces, threw them down upon the sidewalk, in front of Kit; then turning upon his heel, entered the hotel, crying, as he went:

"That's ther style of cattle they raise over in Horror Gulch. Mine's bug-juice. Hev' sumthin', gentlemen!"

This was the first specimen Cool Kit had ever seen of a veritable far West rn tough and to him it was a sight good for sore eyes.

But the way the men of Boise City did file into the hotel bar-room, in response to Howlin' Jake's invitation, was an astonisher to the Kid, for but one man was left on the veranda, or in the vicinity.

"These chaps don't know what a shine is, I don't believe," he muttered, as he picked up the gold-pieces. "Et don't matter tho'. Think I'll start out as a prize-fighter ef I can pull in a hundred dollars every whack."

The man who did not join, in accepting Howlin' Jake's offer, sat tipped back in a chair on the veranda, with his heels elevated against one of the posts that supported the wooden awning.

He was fairly well attired, was of good figure, and an observer, at a glance, would have put him down as a man engaged in some legitimate business.

He wore an immense sweeping beard, which evidently received excellent attention, for there was not a tangle in it.

His eyes, like his hair, were of a brown color, but his skin was unnaturally white.

Cool Kit had paid no attention to the individual, until he was accosted, as he finished picking up the coins.

"Well, sonny, you made quite a haul, didn't you?" taking the cigar out of his mouth.

"Kinder," Kit returned, with a grin, and a criticising look at the inquisitor. "Thet feller must have more tin than he knows what to do with!"

"He has. He is a cattle rancher, off on a spree. Chances are large, he'll go home broke. By the way, since you haven't struck a job, yet, I'll give you one!"

And lowering his feet to the veranda, he waited for Kit to go to work.

"You don't call them aire feet, do ye?" Kit demanded, for their size was extraordinarily large. "Why, them's mud scows, like they use in the marshes."

"It don't matter as to their size, sir. Go ahead, and shine them!" and the man's tone, was not particularly gentle.

"Say, looker here!" Kit retorted, "d'ye expect me ter expend a day's work; all fer a nickel? Oh no! Give me a dollar, an' a foter-graff o' the feet ter sell ter a museum, an' it's a go."

"Here's a dollar. You'll have to hunt up a photograph machine, yourself!"

Without further ceremony, Kit set to work, and soon had a patent-leather shine on the boots that reminded him of old Philadelphia times.

"Yer wears purty decent leather," Kit remarked, pocketing his dollar, and surveying his joo, with pride. "If you'll jest keep them feet o' yourn posted up thar, fer advertisement, I'll ketch lots o' jobs."

"Not many, out here, I'll swear. If you expect to get rich you'll have to go into some more profitable business."

"What bizness?" Kit asked, thinking he had a "bite," from the first.

"On! most anything else, than blacking

boots. No one ever has their boots blacked out here. Running errands, for instance, now—good pay in it—little odd jobs, where a boy ain't particular what he does."

"Thet hits me right in my dormitory," Kit declared, enthusiastically. "I'm handy at anything, an' don't care a continental what it is as long as ther wealth flows inter my treasury."

"That's a good motto, boy. Well, trot around, after awhile, and maybe I'll have a job for you," and with this, the man arose and entered the hotel.

"Bet a cent to a b'iled owl thet I've hit the bull's eye, ther first clip!" Kit muttered. "It's worth lookin' up, anyhow. Guess I'd better not be too loose around heer, at present, fer fear Howlin' Jake's eye will swell on him, an' he'll git mad."

So he trudged away, creating a sensation wherever he went, being quite a novelty.

But he found one thing out.

The old Philadelphia five-cent racket "didn't work worth a cent," so to speak. Every customer he got didn't think anything of paying fifty cents to a dollar for a shine, and as he had a goodly number of customers, his stock of wealth increased very perceptibly.

"This Boise City ain't so slow a town, after all!" he muttered, "an' I'll be jiggered ef I don't think et would be a purty good place ter tie to. Guess I'll mazaruky back, an' see ef my first customer is about."

When he arrived at the hotel, the individual was once more seated on the veranda.

He immediately arose, however, descended to the street, and said:

"Come along with me, boy, if you want to earn some money. I'll put you on the way of doing it."

"Kerect, guv'nor. I'm yer mud-pie, every minute in an hour. Steer ahead, an' I'm with ye, clear up to the chin."

Without reply, the man led on.

Standing erect, he was about six feet in hight, and of powerful build.

From the description Kit had received of the man Schofield, he at once formed the opinion that this was the same party, in disguise.

"I wonder what job he bes got fer me ter do?" Kit muttered, as he hurried along, for he was forced to do so, to keep up with the stranger. "I don't know but I'd better investigate fore I go too fur."

"Though he had a pair of revolvers upon his person, he was none too anxious to get into any new trouble."

"Say, Cap, what sort o' job is this ye want me ter tackle?" he finally demanded. "Seems ter me ye'r goin' a long ways ter find it."

"Only to my residence," was the reply. "I've a letter to write that I want you to deliver at a little mining-settlement ten miles from here. You can catch the next stage for the place, and return by the stage that leaves soon after you get there."

Kit's eyes sparkled with excitement. Here he was, right on to the trail, and the development of his case had reached a point where the denouement must soon come in, gloriously.

He felt like executing a flip-fl p. But, to do so, just now, when the game seemed ripe for plucking, was out of the question.

The walk continued until they reached the Western outskirts of the town, when the man paused before a small slab shanty, and knocked at the door.

There was no answer.

"I guess the old woman is out," he said. "However, it don't matter. I have a key."

This he was not long in producing, and opening the door, they entered.

No sooner had they done so, than Cool Kit was seiz-d, from behind, and his arms pinioned to his side; then he was thrown to the floor, and his feet pinioned, after which a grim voice said:

"Now, younker, ye ain't quite so fly as you have been for some time past, I reckon. An' what's more, you won't be!"

CHAPTER XII.

OUT OF BONDAGE—"DEAD ON" THE TRAIL.

It was for Kit to realize, now, that he was in a trap, and that, for once, his shrewdness had been overmatched.

Lying upon the floor, on his back, he allowed his gaze to wander about the apartment which contained but a few chairs and a table, and he saw who were his captors.

The tall, large footed man, of course, was one. Then, there was a woman, a young man, and the third was the identical fellow who accosted the Kid, on Chestnut street, in Philadelphia.

The young woman was *petite*, yet well-formed, with a pretty countenance, which was purely French in its features. She was tastily attired.

The young man was rather a dandyish looking individual, with blonde hair and mustache, and looked hardly like a heavy villain, but more like a person who would be a tool, in a heavy villain's power.

The man who had uttered the taunt evidently was the one whom Kit had met in the Quaker City, so to him the undaunted boy cried:

"Hillo! is that you, old eggs? Why darn my socks, ef you ain't the same crank I met out in Philamydelphy. How do ye do, Mister Sam Slaughter?"

"You'll find out soon enough how I am!" the man retorted, fiercely. "Talk to the accursed rat, Schofield," he said, impatiently. "He is too tonguey for me. I'd kill him for a cent."

"Guess you've done 'bout ernuff killin' fer a while, ain't yer?" Kit flashed back.

"Don't you be so lippy, my bird, or you'll stop talking very suddenly," Schofield admonished, quietly. "We want to know what you know about the case."

"What case?"

"No back talk, or pretended ignorance now. What do you know about the suicide in Philadelphia?"

"Nothin'. It wasn't no suicide," Kit replied, coolly—"it was a deliberate murder, an' Slaughter, yender, did the job."

"What impelled you to turn detective?"

"Dunno, more'n I smelt a rat, an' it 'curred ter me Lorter trap fer it."

"No one suggested the thing to you?"

"Nary a one."

"On your way here, an attempt was made to kidnap Rogers's other daughter?"

"Yes, but we was too much for the dodgers."

"Where are the parties?"

"In Chicago, locked up, where they won't hurt themselves a dodgin' the law."

"Who is this man Yale?"

"A feller who took a fancy to me, an' volunteered to see me through to the end."

"Is he poor?"

"Dunno. S'pect he ain't as rich as old Gould!"

"I presume old Rogers thinks well of you, for bringing his girl back, and for informing him of the details of the plot against him."

"Oh! you bet! He's goin' ter send me ter ther Legislatur', next year, soon's I git a mustache started."

"He might better be getting estimates on a tombstone for you, boy. Now, look here: We are all friends of Mr. Slaughter here, and employed by him in various branches of the business he carries on. I suppose you have learned that Mr. Slaughter has had ample cause for seeking revenge on old Rogers, and that the first step toward its consummation has been taken."

"Kerect."

"Well, it was, and yet is intended by Mr. Slaughter, to ruin Rogers, both financially and mentally. As you have proven yourself to be a shrewd young bound, and as we intend to use you, I state all this to prepare you for the work you are to do."

"You don't say! How sensible ye are!"

"You'd have been knocked in the head an hour after your arrival in Boise City, but for the fact that we concluded to work you in to good advantage; so now it is a matter of death, or obedience to our orders—we are not particular which."

"D'ye mean ye'd kill me ef I didn't agree ter do as you order?"

"Most assuredly."

"Then thet settles it. Old Rogers an' the case can go to blazes fer all me; I ain't takin' any kill in mine jest at present, ef you please. But go ahead wi' yer proposish."

"It was our intention to offer Rogers the ashes of his daughters at a big price, but since we succeeded only in a part of the plot, through your smartness, we shall have to give up that plan, unless you think Rogers would give a big price for Cassie's dust."

Kit shuddered at the man's heartless villainy.

"I dunno, I'm sure!" he declared. "S'pose ye c'd tell best by tryin'. Don't think, tho', he'd shell out very p'rt."

"Oh, we'll make him do that, fast enought, when we get things all arranged. Now, in order to work the game as we propose, we want the other girl. It is all-important we should have her in our possession. Only in that way can we work Rogers for every cent he is worth."

"Shouldn't wonder but what you are right," Kit agreed, resolved to see the thing through to the end if he died for it.

"How are you going to get possession of the girl, tho'?"

"We are not going to do it. That is for you to do for us!"

"Me?" Kit ejaculated, both anxious and elated at the prospect.

"Yes, you! We shall make you worth every cent of the value of your life to us. The captain does not expect to operate around here for any great length of time, and while we are here, we do not intend to let any scruples interfere with our little game. We purpose to get possession of the girl through you, and, that as soon as possible."

"Reckon you'll have to wait awhile, before I get her for you," Kit declared. "Dunno how I could work the racket."

"Oh! we'll put you onto that, easy enough. You indite an affectionate epistle to your girl sweetheart, requesting her to meet you at the point where she left you, last night. See?"

"So you was there, hey?"

"Oh! certainly. Your every movement was shadowed, from the time you arrived in Boise City!"

"Will you promise to write what we dictate?"

"I s'pose I'll have to, tho' it goes ag'in' my grain."

"I dare say it won't afflict your grain so much as a knife would, if drawn across your jugular!"

The shanty boasted of a rude deal-table, and Kit was lifted to a chair, beside it. Before him was placed a pencil and sheet of paper, and also a letter.

"You're to copy from that!" Slaughter ordered, "and mind you do it right, or I'll slit your throat!" And Slaughter evidently meant what he said.

The letter which Kit was to copy was as follows:

"DEAR LILY:—I send you this in great haste. Meet me to-night, at eight o'clock, at the point where you left me. Say nothing to any one. I have made a great discovery, and you must be the first one to know of it. Yours, Kit."

"Go ahead and copy it!" Slaughter commanded, "and don't ye change a word. I'll soon show Steve Rogers how he miscalculated when he tarred and feathered me."

Kit proceeded to obey, for well he knew it would be useless to parley, or refuse.

A faint ray of hope entered his mind, as he duplicated the decoying note—would not Lily's suspicion be aroused?

If so, she would show the letter to Yale and her father, and they would make an attempt to capture her would-be captors!

So he copied the letter, in as good a style of chirography as he could command, and shoved it away from him.

"There. That's ther best I kin do," he said. "It's a dirty mean trick to make me do it, too."

Slaughter laughed, maliciously.

"I guess it won't change your fortunes much. Tie him up again, boys."

Accordingly, Kit's hands were again bound, and he was dragged into one corner of the room, and left lying there.

"Do you suppose he'll be safe, there?" Slaughter demanded, of Schofield, who was evidently his right-hand man.

"Of course he'll be safe," was the reply. "We'll lock the door, and I'll guarantee we'll find him here, if we ever have occasion to come back, again. Nobody is likely to come within hearing of this place, once a week."

So they were going off, to leave him!

This was better news, to Kit, than though they had remained.

"Let 'em slide," he mused. "Ef I can't git out o' this fix, somehow, I ain't King of the Kids—"

Then aloud:

"Say, see here, this ain't fair," he whined. "Ye ain't goin' ter clear out and leave me locked up ter starve, be ye? I think that's meaner'n stealin' the gal."

"Get out, you whelp. You ought to be thankful you're alive," Slaughter growled. "If you get hungry, bite off your tongue and eat that. You won't have so much then."

The quartette soon took their departure, not forgetting to lock the door after them.

There was but the one room to the shanty, and the only furniture consisted of the table and a few stools.

There were two windows, one on either side of the door, which, in itself, was not a very substantial affair.

Taking in his surroundings, point for point, Kit turned his attention to himself. His ankles were securely bound with strips of hide, and his hands were tied behind his back, presumably with the same kind of thong. Breaking them, of course, was out of the question; so what was to be done?

After some maneuvering, he rolled over to the table, and gained a standing position, walking, of course, being out of the question. Once at the table he pushed it before him, and jumped after it, dragging a stool along behind him.

When the table was near the window, Kit gradually edged around, so as to bring himself between the table and window, with the stool in his grasp.

Poising himself, he crushed the stool against the window with all his might.

The result was exactly what he most desired.

Away went glass and sash, and an opening to the outer air was effected.

It was by this time getting dark, but he was able to see that the nearest habitation was not over a quarter of a mile away.

"I'll get there somehow, an' then I'll be all right. Then, Mister Slaughter, ef I don't block yer little game, my name's not Cool Kit. Ye can git Lily in spite o' me, but I'm a Jersey mud-hen ef I don't put ye in the hoel yet."

To get out of the window was not a difficult feat for one so active as the Arab, so he was soon on terra firma.

As no other plan was left him, he at once began to roll over and over toward the nearest dwelling, from the window of which now gleamed a light.

It was a slow and tiresome task, but he finally got near enough to make his calls for assistance heard, and to his great delight a man and a woman with a lantern soon came running up.

In less time than it takes to tell it, he was set at liberty, and invited to the near-by habitation, where he was given a warm supper, while he briefly narrated the particulars of his capture, without revealing any of the other facts of the case.

After supper, and rewarding his rescuers with a five-dollar gold-piece, he set out for the heart of the town.

Within an hour's time he had secured a fleet horse, and was flying over the road toward Bed Rock.

"Now, Mr. Slaughter-house," he muttered, "look out fer me! I'm comin', an' there's music in the air. The band is beginnin' ter toot the 'Dead March in Saul!'"

CHAPTER XIII.

SLAUGHTER'S LETTER

ALTHOUGH he had some little experience at horseback-riding, never in all his life did Kit have such a ride as that from Boise City to Bed Rock.

The horse he had secured was a "goer," and seemed perfectly familiar with the route, and it sometimes dashed along with a speed that fairly made Kit's hair stand erect, although he experienced no difficulty in keeping his seat in the saddle, so easy was the gait.

In less than an hour's time, he reined his foam-flecked steed in at the door of the Rogers cottage.

The old man and Yale instantly rushed from the cabin, both visibly excited, and the detective looking as if he were just in from a journey.

"Lily! Lily! Do you know anything of her?" the old man demanded, eagerly. "She has disappeared and we cannot find her."

"How long have you missed her?" Kit cried.

"What time is it?"

"It is after nine o'clock. She has been gone over an hour but I thought nothing of it, as she often runs out, calling on the neighbors. But, when Yale returned from Boise a few minutes ago and reported that you could not be found, I began a search and cannot find my child."

"Then ye can calculate that she's in the power o' yer enemy, Samuel Slaughterhouse," Kit declared. "I thought mebbe I c'd git heer in time ter pervent et, but it seems that I can't git onter ther back o' makin' a boss go a mile a minnit."

He proceeded then to narrate his adventures, and the probable fate of Lily.

"But don't git down in ther mouth, nunk," he said, as Mr. Rogers groaned aloud in anguish of spirit. "It's bound to turn out all right. Jest pick yer teeth and be ready for the pig, as the Irishman said, an' I'll fetch matters around all bunky, or my name ain't Christofer Cool."

"I'm afraid Slaughter has got the best of the game," Yale said, dubiously.

"Oh! you're afeard et's goin' ter rain every time ye see a coon on the street!" Kit retorted. "'Cause a feller steals a base on yer, that don't hurt; slug him at ther next. Now, as ther sermon is over, ef you'll git a lantern I'll take ye ter wher the gal was scooped in."

The camp had not been aroused, as Mr. Rogers had pursued his inquiries for Lily very quietly; so, procuring a lantern, the trio went alone to the point where Lily and Kit had parted, the previous night, and after a short search, evidence was found of a struggle having taken place.

There were, also, hoof-marks, which proved conclusively enough that Lily had been carried off, on horseback.

"She's a goner, sure enuff," Kit admitted, as they made their way back to the cottage. "Old Sam has got her, an' now, the next thing aire ter find wher his new hang-out is."

"That will be next to impossible," Mr. Rogers said, sadly. "The mountains abound with places of concealment, and it would be only time lost to attempt to find the infernal wretch."

"You are right!" Yale agreed. "I see but one way to settle this matter, father!"

"Father!" echoed Mr. Rogers, starting back, in inexpressible astonishment—"father!"

"Yes, father," the detective replied, putting out his hand. "Have you not suspected that I am your son, Simon Yale Rogers?"

For a moment, the speculator stared at him, as if he could not comprehend—then, he sprang forward, with a glad cry, and was locked in his boy's embrace.

"My son! my son! can this be true? Yes, I realize, now, that it is true, for I can see that you look as she did, years ago. And the name too—I see it all, now. My boy grown up, so handsome and noble! May God be praised!"

"Yes, father, I am your son, and our meeting is no more of a pleasure to you than to me; and but for this noble-hearted King of Kids, Cool Kit, it is likely we should never have met, in this world!"

They had reached the cottage by this time, and here the reunion gained a warmer aspect, and explanations and congratulations were exchanged, until, all at once, the father and son made the discovery that Cool Kit was among the missing.

Unseen he had slipped from the cabin, and gone—where?

That was a question not easy to answer, for the night passed away and the King of Kids did not return.

Nor did the dawn of day bring him back to the cabin, although Yale and Mr. Rogers sat up the night through, awaiting his return. When morning came, Mr. Rogers looked his anxiety.

"Do you think they have captured him too?" he queried, pacing to and fro, across the room; "for if they have, I fear we shall miss his services, sadly. I have great confidence in his genius and shrewdness."

"No more than I," Yale replied; "but I do not calculate on his being captured. He has gone to find Lily, and he will not give up, till he gets starved out. He was caught once, and he will be wary enough not to be caught a second time."

"Then, must we remain inactive, while he is searching?"

"By no means. Indeed, I do not think we will be given a chance. Before many hours, you will be called upon to pay a ransom, for Lily, and poor Cassie's remains."

"What, then?"

"I see but one thing to do: Slaughter is a man, I judge, who, once he has the upper hands, will stand no trifling. He will make a demand on you for ransom money, and if you do not come to time—"

"Well—?"

"He will kill Lily, out of spite, before your eyes, and depend upon you being only too glad then to ransom the body and Cassie's ashes!"

"Great God! Do you believe that such a thing could be possible?"

"I do. An act such as Cassie's murder and incineration proves the man a human fiend, and a human fiend might safely be counted capable of any further horrible deed!"

"Then what must I do?"

"How much money have you, at your command?"

"I presume I can raise sixty thousand dollars."

"Do you suppose Slaughter has an idea that you can raise so much?"

"Yes. I haven't a doubt but what he knows, to a cent, what my bank account is."

"Then, I see nothing else for you to do but draw out your money, and stand ready to meet his demands. Of course, it is hard to lose so much, but scarcely harder, I think, than to see Lily's life sacrificed, and Cassie's ashes scattered to the winds!"

"True! true! my boy; such a thing cannot be permitted, even though we have to give up the last stitch of clothing on our backs. I shall, of course, have to go to Boise City, to obtain the money."

"I will accompany you, and, to all intents, will remain there, leaving you to return here alone; but I will return, secretly, and be near at hand, all the while."

It was so arranged.

Stages ran frequently, between Bed Rock and the city; so father and son made ready, and caught the next one that started.

On their arrival in Boise City, Mr. Rogers proceeded to the bank, and withdrew his deposit, and took the next stage for Bed Rock; while Yale remained in Boise City, and sauntered about town, idly, as if having nothing to do.

Instead of following his movements, we will return with Mr. Rogers to Bed Rock.

The old gentleman was well-armed, but, nevertheless, was very nervous, all the way, lest the stage should be stopped, and he robbed of all his cash.

Such an event did not occur, however, and he reached his cottage in safety, shortly after noon.

On his arrival there, he found a letter thrust in under the door, which he read with feelings that can better be imagined than described.

It was from Samuel Slaughter, and ran as follows, the most careful pains evidently having been taken to make it a model of communications of its kind:

"NEAR BED ROCK, IDO.
August 19th, 188-.

"STEPHEN ROGERS, SIR:—

"I presume it will not surprise you to receive a few lines from me, your former partner and confidant, inasmuch as I know that you are aware I have inaugurated my campaign under the most favorable auspices. And when I come to deliberate over the circumstances that caused me to open this campaign, I feel confident that you cannot reasonably regret the success I shall surely attain, considering the expense and trouble I have been forced to shoulder, in order to perfect all necessary arrangements for a triumphant victory."

"For months—ay, years, now—I have been planning and scheming toward the end that now draweth nigh."

"It was the consuming passion of my life—this object, revenge. It was the haunting visitant of my dreams, at night; it haunted my every thought by day; so much so that it became the ruling passion of my life—to wreak revenge on you, who spoiled my love's young dream, and instigated the application to my skin of a coat of tar and feathers."

"Ah! that was fun, wasn't it—fun for all except me; but, after all, I did not regret it so much, as it increased my hatred for you a hundred-fold, and set me to work to devise methods to strike you the most malignant, soul-torturing blow man could devise. I shadowed you, when you little dreamed of it, and took note of your devotion to your children, resolved through them to consummate my scheme."

"Although you may not be aware of the fact, I now have, and long have had in my employ a number of people, who, so long as they are paid well, are not afraid of work so long as it is strictly honest and honorable. Of course they would not stoop to do any other kind of work. Well, by working things nicely, I enticed your daughters to Philadelphia, and one of them, by some inexplicable accident, came to her death. Knowing how bitterly you would be opposed to having her remains put under the sod so far from you, I was thoughtful and considerate enough to have them cremated, in order that they could be more easily transported hither. I have them with me now, securely put up in a silver jar, bearing a label, \$25,000."

"Your youngest daughter, unfortunately, escaped my guardianship, and was returned to you by a boy, who has, ere now, passed beyond his sphere of usefulness in this world. And, at the same time, your daughter is my captive. And thus my revenge is accomplished, Steve Rogers, and it is very sweet."

"It is my desire to close up business in these parts with all dispatch possible, as I have interests demanding my attention elsewhere. My *affaires* have already gone in advance of me, and I shall follow as soon as we conclude our monetary transactions."

"Your daughter Lillian I do not propose to kill, unless it becomes necessary, as my appetite for revenge can be satiated without murder. She is yours again—for a price."

"You have in bank, at Boise City, fifty-eight thousand dollars. For that sum you can have back your daughter, and the silver jar—and not for one cent less."

"It will be useless to parley. The money, or the ashes of the dead shall be scattered to the winds, and the living daughter shall be lost to you forever. These are the only terms."

"Follow the appended directions if you wish to receive your treasures back. Leave your place at five o'clock to-night, and walk to the Big Bear ledge overlooking the falls of Little Painter cataract. You know where it is, for you have been there. Bring no one with you, under penalty of not only your own life but that of your daughter."

"When you reach the ledge, and I am perfectly satisfied that you are alone and no one near, I will appear to you, receive the ransom money, deliver up your daughter and the jar, and keeping you covered, retire forever from your sight and this region. If not satisfied that you are alone, I will not appear, and you will be shot dead, and robbed and your daughter and the jar cast over the precipice. That will be the end."

"So take your choice. The moon will shine on Big Bear ledge at nine o'clock, and I shall look for you at that hour."

"Triumphantly yours,

"SAM'L SLAUGHTER."

What must the all-wise Ruler think of a man with soul so scarred with sin?

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

POOR old Steven Rogers!

He perused the terrible letter, in a dazed sort of way, and yet only too clearly comprehended it all—that Slaughter, indeed, had triumphed in his revenge and was now the master.

Five o'clock soon came, and Yale had not yet put in an appearance, at the cottage; so, knowing of nothing better to do, Rogers mounted his horse, and set off into the mountains, on his journey to the little Painter cataract, a turbulent creek that leaped down the mountain-side, and, flowing out upon a wide shelving rock, fell, in a silvery sheet, into a basin, fifty feet below.

Mr. Rogers had been there before, prospecting, and knew just how to reach it.

It was a tedious journey through labyrinthine mountain-passages, and it was full nine o'clock, ere he set foot upon the ledge, which Slaughter had named, in his letter.

The moon sent a dim flood of light down upon the rugged scene; the water flowed swiftly over the precipice, and went roaring down, into the depths, below.

As Rogers stepped upon the ledge, from the tortuous path, which led to it, a deep commanding voice cried out:

"Stephen Rogers, fold your arms and halt!"

The speculator obeyed, and the next moment Slaughter stepped from behind a projecting spur of rock and confronted him.

"Ah! you are punctual," the villain said, eyeing the old man, venomously. "Who did you bring with you, sir?"

"If you have kept track of my movements, you monster, you know that I came alone."

"Correct. I will give you credit for telling the truth, if nothing more. Did you bring the money?"

"I did."

"So I am aware. You went to Boise in advance of my letter, anticipating what my demand would be. That was kind of you, as I am in somewhat of a hurry to get out of this part of the country, so deliver."

"I must first see my daughter, and the vase!" Rogers replied, sternly.

Without reply, Slaughter backed behind the spur, keeping the revolver in his grasp, ready for instant use.

In a moment he returned, leading Lily, and carrying the jar, which he placed at her feet, as he brought her to a standstill.

"There, sir, is your daughter and the jar. Now, the money!"

Rogers drew a large bundle of bills from his pocket, and tossed them to the scoundrel, who caught them with one hand, still maintaining revolver guard with his other.

"Now, then, Stephen, my revenge being complete, I will bid you adieu forever," he said, as he began backing behind the ledge.

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth, however, when a boyish figure sprang from behind the spur, and with a blow from a club knocked the revolver from Slaughter's grasp, at the same time making a dash to secure it.

Quick as a flash, and with a snarl not unlike an infuriated panther, Slaughter seized his new adversary, and endeavored to hurl him into the falls; but with the tenacity of a twenty-horsepower leech, the boy clung to him—for it was Cool Kit—and a desperate struggle ensued, Mr. Rogers seeming suddenly powerless to interfere, while, as for Lily, her hands were tied behind her back.

Nearer and nearer to the edge of the precipice the two foes writhed.

Then—bark!
A rifle report!

Slaughter staggers, falls—goes over the precipice, carrying Cool Kit with him, just as Yale Rogers leaps upon the ledge.

Slaughter's body and that of Cool Kit were recovered in the basin, many feet below. The ruffian was dead, and his body was at once cast into the torrent by the detective, who soon reached the spot.

In Kit Cool's body a spark of life was found to remain, and this was slowly nursed into a flame, until the boy was able to be conveyed back to Bed Rock, where of course he received the best care that money or kindness could produce.

It was weeks, however, before he was able to sit up, or understand what had happened—weeks of mental and physical suffering, such as many a constitution less rugged than his could not have endured.

At last, he "came around all right," and was then first told of all that had happened, after his terrible plunge over the precipice.

Slaughter's three companions had been found dead, in a cabin in the mountains, and their bloated condition proclaimed that they had come to their death by poison, which, no doubt, had been administered by the prince of fiends incarnate—Slaughter.

Cassie's ashes had been buried.

News from Chicago had been received to the effect that McGill and his confederates had been let out on bail, but had "skipped" and were then at large.

And Yale? Oh! Yale had returned East, weeks before, and a letter had been received from him, announcing his good health, inquiring after Kit, and sending word that he was to be married inside of a twelvemonth to a Miss Dorrit Darling.

And Lily? Kit brightened perceptibly, as he inquired about her.

Lily? Why she had accompanied Yale as far East as a certain young ladies' seminary, where she would remain two years, to finish her education. She also had written, and sent her kindest regards to Kit.

"And, now, my dear boy," Mr. Rogers said, when, a few days later, the young hero was able to be up and about, once more in good health—"now, Kit, I want to know how much I am indebted to you for the noble work you have done, for myself and family. The money Slaughter would have got, but for you, I have already placed in the bank to your credit, and anything else you name I will endeavor to do for you!"

"Mr. Rogers!" Kit returned, "I want neither money nor other compensation for the service I have been able to do, nor will I accept it. Some day, when I have made my mark in the world, and stand on an equal footing, both socially and financially, with her whom you have sent beyond my reach—then, I will claim my reward!"

No argument could change his mind. His resolution was fixed and as firm as adamant; and the very next day, with his blacking-box slung to his back, and a feeling of injured pride gnawing at his heart, he boarded the train, and left Boise City, perhaps forever.

Out into the world to go, to prove himself the King of Kids!

THE END.

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